Navigating the Space Between Us

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Finding Connection, while Embracing the Continua of Difference: A Dilemma Driven Conflict Analysis

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Introduction

What Is This Book About?

This book is about the following, whether we are a disputant in conflict, or whether we are facilitating a conflict resolution process.

- First, strategies to manage our conflicts, that are often filled with emotions and differences of values and ethics. These conflicts have both external and internal dimensions, making even simple conflicts more complex. The start to this process to find a space and time, were disputants can calmly discuss differences and dilemmas.
- Second, navigating seemingly intractable conflicts, differences, and dilemmas in the most productive way possible. Progress on the intractable side of the difficulty continuum require patience and acceptance that progress will, at times, be only incremental. Furthermore, working with heated conflicts, that involve us personally, and trying to help other people with their heated conflicts, is a messy and difficult task.
- Third, this book is dedicated to helping us navigate the messiness, and build on basic human decency to begin the resolution process, nurture it's growth, and find satisfaction in building a stronger relationship between disputants, even though the conflict itself may remain unresolved for a long time.

No one is so talented or so smart to easily calm the fires, avoid the uncertainties, ambiguities, and misinterpretations that emerge in difficult conflicts and disputes. Therefore, those of us who work with conflict must resist our own perfectionism; rather, we need to be comfortable with our mistakes and disconnections, and confident that progress is occurring—even when it appears gloomy.

Furthermore, we need to be comfortable with the mistakes and disconnections of other disputants. Foremost, conflict facilitators need to manage their emotions, and not be triggered by the emotions of the disputants. Managing emotions means managing our stress level. Managing our stress level means having some kind of meditative, or prayerful, practice that works for us.

That said, we can continually improve our ways of working with conflicts, differences, and dilemmas. This book is intended to help us get on-track to improve our seemingly intractable conflict skills and strategies. This book is intended to help you, as well as remind me, about what we need to do in a world of conflict that needs our assistance.

In more specific terms, this book attempts of open up a space between the positions, interests, differences, and dilemmas that separate us from each other, or that split up our psyches. Within that negotiating space, I suggest fifteen strategies that will help us navigate it, with the goal of understanding, compassion, empathy, and, at least, incremental progress.

My belief, and the belief of others, who work with seemingly intractable conflicts, is that there are always reasons for optimism because of those few moving parts. The strategies that I suggest, below, are aimed at finding those moving parts, and using their mobility to get back on-track toward understanding, connection, and perhaps, finding some degree of mutual progress. In this process, we will find a way to **strengthen our wider human community**, while strengthening our **sense of integrated self.**

What are seemingly intractable conflicts?

In the simplest terms, intractable conflict is a difference or dilemma that generates **powerful emotions and seems impossible to resolve**. These conflicts are intractable because they do not seem to have a track toward resolution. What makes a conflict intractable are the walls of emotion that separate individuals, identity groups, and competing geopolitical forces. Walls of emotion are driven by sociological identity, psychological patterns, individual and group values and ethics.

For example, the **Israel/Palestine Conflict** has been intractable for years and years because of the walls of emotion and traumatic experiences on both sides. On a smaller scale, family members can become estranged from each other, and in some cases, never communicate—even reaching the end of their without reconciliation.

Sometimes, individuals have inner conflicts that are intractable because inner conflicts can be difficult to identify, understand, and because individuals can be unwilling to get help from professionals. **Childhood, family, gender, race, orientation, and cultural abuse and trauma** can also create and maintain seemingly intractable conflicts.

If disputants find a way to calmly discuss how to productively address a conflict, then conflicts can begin to be transformed from a heated barrier into a somewhat more manageable and negotiable difference or dilemma. On the optimistic side, intractable conflicts have potentially moving parts—the challenge is to patiently discover their hidden places. Often, this requires help from others, especially when the conflict is within oneself. It is important to remember that external conflicts generate internal conflicts. **Mental health professionals** are often trained to work with the internal dimension to conflicts.

Disputants usually have different emotional stories about the conflict at hand. In taking sides in a conflict, disputants build the best case for their side, and express the severity of the conflict through their

emotions, like anger, grief, sorrow, disgust, revenge, outrage, hate, disbelief, etc. These different stories must be retold with some common theme, so that a larger narrative can emerge.

Successful mediations, between the **Greeks and Turks on Cyprus**, have occurred when the disputants have agreed that the civil war has visited tragedy on both sides—this becomes the common theme, where the different narratives transform into a common narrative of suffering on both sides. Peace processes have found solid roots in these common-narrative-discovery mediations.

The dilemma about the role of emotions in conflict is that it is so hard for disputants to release the grip of their emotions. Loosening this grip is necessary so that disputants can begin to calmly discuss the difference or dilemma at hand. Disputants often feel that their emotions are part of the problem, part of their principles, and part of their identity. From their perspective, releasing their emotions diminishes the problem, diminishes their principles, and weakens their group identification. Mediators need to emphasize that managing emotions does not undermine the strength of disputants sense of injustice. Rather, deescalated negotiations will create a renewed sense of justice for both sides.

Emotional flooding is the root of intractability. Disputants need to be encouraged to find a way to think about their stories, principles, and identities that find strength (not lose strength) in accommodating the stories, principles, and identities of their adversaries.

What conflicts are easy to get on track toward resolution?

Intractable conflict sits at one end of a continuum. At the other end of the continuum, we find tractable conflict. These are the conflicts where all of the disputants are highly motivated to resolve the conflict—keep the process on-tract to resolution. Examples of tractable conflict can be found at **neighborhood mediation centers**, where neighbors have easily resolvable conflicts, like how to paint a fence that borders two properties. (hint: paint each side to the preference of each neighbor. I had such a conflict, and it was resolved in a single phone call.)

Where tractable conflicts may seem relatively easy to resolve, they are not always fully resolved because of human unpredictability, the volatility of emotions, and the random disjunctions that spring up in even the most placid circumstances. On the other hand, seemingly intractable conflicts may, quite surprisingly, resolve themselves by the same human unpredictability, sudden brightening of emotions, and the random connections that can instantly occur in the most distressing circumstances. But, as a betting person, one’s best bet is that tractable conflicts are much more commonly resolved than intractable conflicts. My point is that conflict workers should not be too confident, nor cynical, about the conflicts at hand.

How can we address seemingly intractable dilemmas?

Let's look at an **example** to illustrate the way I recommend that we address dilemmas.

We are now faced with a full-fledged "Climate Apocalypse" or the "Age of Climate Panic," as in addition to climate change and looming runaway greenhouse gases, we have now found out that "over 40% of insect species are threatened with extinction." (*Biological Conservation*, Volume 232, April 2019, Pages 8-27) This potential staggering loss of insects, that are an indispensable key to ecosystem survival; means that, without drastic changes, ecosystems across the planet will fail, undermining the foundation of nature and life on this planet. This potential catastrophic die-off is caused by:

- Agriculture-driven habitat loss;
- Pesticides and other agricultural-chemical pollutants;
- Invasive species;
- Climate change.

What is the dilemma in the case? Given the amount of science-denial across the globe, it will be difficult to adequately address these problems in a relatively short amount of time. Predictions vary on how climate change and runaway greenhouse gases will become irreversible. However, at the least, climate change is already intensifying horrific weather and wildfire events, rapidly escalating extinctions, and creating ever-increasing climate refugees. Can these effects be reversed without authoritarian dictates and military force? People who advocate for climate change remedies are likely people who would find authoritarian and militaristic solutions to be abhorrent. So, how would people who champion democracy and freedom support the sacrifice of these same values to adequately address climate change?

The following navigation strategies will be revisited in the chapters of the textbook that follows.

List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas

(1) **Researching the History of the Conflict:** Look for diverse accounts and perspectives. After answering all of these questions, conflict workers will be in a better position to productively navigate

the conflict. One's work here will be the beginning of a case study, that can be referenced later, when confronted with a similar conflict.

- When did the conflict begin?
- What is its history?
- What are the conflicting narratives/experiences?
- Who cares about this conflict?
- Why do they care?
- What is each disputant's stake in the conflict?
- Why is the conflict seen as intractable?
- Has it always been seen as intractable?

Case Study: Howard Zinn's ***A People's History of the United States*** (2003) includes the accounts of lower-income, lower-power, diverse peoples, whose voices and histories have not been included in traditional U.S. history books. This means that researching American history must include all of the sides to historical conflicts.

(2) **Develop Navigation Strategies**:

- What is the goal in navigating the conflict better?
- What are the moving parts?
- In theory, every seemingly intractable conflict has moving parts, therefore, the moving parts need to be inventoried.
- Are there multiple conflicts, differences, and dilemmas?
- The goal of working with the dilemma needs to be clearly established.
- A broad base of expertise needs to be created to hammer out strategies.
- The widest possible dialogue, involving diverse political views, cultures, and traditions needs to occur, so that the strategies can find traction globally, if necessary.
- Implementation of the strategies may need to be sufficiently funded and linked to powerful

institutions.

Case Study: **Israel/ Palestinian Conflict**. John Burton's early work on conflict resolution focused on the hot conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s. The Israel/Palestinian Conflict was included in his studies. As one of the founders of conflict resolution, he helped inform the peace processes in both Israel and Palestine. Scholars, today, are well aware of the moving parts in the peace dialogues, over a long history in that region. Of particular interest is the role of the U.S.A., that can either accelerate or block progress of these moving parts.

(3) **Ongoing Intractable Conflict**: Some people have deeply embedded beliefs and values that fuel ongoing intractable conflicts. Sometimes, these people may be unaware of these beliefs and values, as they may have been inherited from relatives, or internalized as an aspect of peer group identification. In these cases, being confronted with conflicting beliefs and values may generate hostility and no new thinking. However, conflicting beliefs, communicated with tact and kindness, may give dogmatic people something to think about, which may eventually provide an opening for softening differences, and even—at some point—gaining allies. This is why it is important to befriend people who have different beliefs and values. Being friends humanizes and contextualizes both sets of beliefs and values—probably more than anything else.

Case Study: **Saluting the Nazi Flag.** A friend of mine's neighbor had a Nazi swastika flag in his house, which he and his son saluted with the Nazi, outstretched arm, salute. My friend pointed out that this behavior could get his son into trouble at school, if he used the Nazi salute to salute the U.S. flag. Hearing this, the neighbor took down the swastika flag to protect his son at school. Softening differences; gaining allies.

(4) **Continuum Thinking—Not Polarized Thinking**: We think in binary terms way too much. If we construct a continuum between polarities, we'll find that people are rarely at the extremes, but rather they wander around the continuum, depending on the circumstance. Ongoing conflicts, differences, and dilemmas tend to be polarized to such a degree that there is little room to think in-between the polarities. One way to address this tendency towards polarization is to construct a continuum between extremes and map the actual positions, interests, differences, and dilemmas within the space created for navigation.

Case Study: **Courtroom Conflicts**: In American courtrooms, we find that polar thinking is alive and well, with verdicts of guilty or innocent, depending on the preponderance of evidence. However, many legal cases are more nuanced than it first appears. There are often extenuating and mitigating circumstances, and in civil court, the monetary judgements can vary dramatically, one case to another. So we find both polar thinking and continuum thinking within legal conflicts.

(5) **Emotional Flooding** How do we calm the emotional flooding that arises in heated disputes? How can we transform a seemingly intractable conflict from a heated preoccupation with the past into planning for a more peaceful and just future?

Case Study: **Post-trauma preoccupation with the past**: Abused children can easily define their childhoods, and even their adulthood, by traumas experienced early in life. This post-trauma preoccupation with the past can be overcome through expert psychotherapy, so that an abuse victim can create a new identity that is relatively free of the scars of the past. This kind of reinvention is challenging, therefore it requires a supportive community to help victims regain a sense of safety after experiences that solidified a view that the world is a profoundly unsafe place. Conflict resolution processes, that involved abused disputants, may be easily sidetracked by emotional flooding and fears of losing control. Ultimately, victims need to be nurtured to a place where they no longer identify as victims—then their participation in conflict resolution processes will be much more positive.

(6) **Identity Conflict**: "Who am I?" is a question that vexes almost everyone at some time or another. We may start out our lives, thinking of ourselves in one way, then later, begin to think of ourselves in another way. Sometimes, these changes will occur several times during one's life. Careers can change, friendship groups can change, sexual orientations can change; political philosophies can change; cultural identifications can change—amongst other affinities. Identifications can be at the root of conflicts within families, workplaces, and in the broader community.

Case Study: **Transgender identification**: A close friend of mine transitioned, as a married adult with grown children. Transitioning meant a divorce, and a certain temporary alienation with their children.

It also raised worries that their workplace would reject them. With support from professionals and friends, this friend has resolved these conflicts, partly because of the CR training that they received.

(7) **Spiritual Panic:** "Is my existence eternal or limited?" is a question about mortality that troubles us, one time or another. "Will my death be the end of me? Or will I somehow survive in some form?" Identity conflicts overlap with spiritual panic: "What is my identity, and will it survive past my death?" Worries about one's fundamental spiritual identity can create stress, anxiety, and even panic attacks. The way that people manage this fundamental question can determine their affiliations with religions, or a commitment to atheism or agnosticism. It can even lead to deathbed conversions to a religion. Because of the strong feelings (panic!), a person's spiritual commitment can also be at the root of conflicts within families, workplaces, and in the broader community.

Case Study: **Wilderness Identification**: When am I the most relaxed and in touch with my fundamental identity? It is, without a doubt, when I am alone in the wilderness. That's me. The urban or suburban me, or even the traveler me, or the professor me, are all elements of myself—but not a full sense of my complete identity.

Of course, I am rarely in the wilderness, so I am rarely my full self. Nonetheless, my time in the woods stays with me. In nature, I don't fear not being me after my death—though I do fear being torn apart by an angry bear! But I don't fear the fact of my mortality anymore that other species' fear of losing their identity in death. Flowers bloom and die, but flowers are also eternally beautiful in their endless cycle of life. You can look at a dead flower and grieve the loss of life, or you can marvel at the beauty that the flower shared with the world.

A longtime, close friend of mine suddenly died, recently in Spain. The last three words that I texted him, when he was perfectly healthy, were "cycle of life." Coincidence?

If identity is not a snapshot on Facebook, but a full sense of one's cycle of life, there is endless beauty within us, and around us, even in tragic endings. And no room for spiritual panic. But, like everyone else, the civilized-me experiences spiritual panic, and then I need to reorient myself to the beauty of all of the life cycles around me. (Not always easy!)

(8) **Cognitive Dissonance**: Given that we have trouble navigating two opposing views that we have

internalized, cognitive dissonance is a common conflict that is difficult to resolve because it can be so deeply embedded in our minds. Finding a way of validating two conflicting experiences is difficult. As a first step, I suggest that we try to be curious and comfortable with internalized differences. The next step is to map out these conflicts in a way that will help us navigate it.

Case Study: **The Squad**: US Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) said the following in 2019:

"I want to talk about the political influence in this country that says it is okay to push for allegiance to a foreign country," Specifically, she was objecting to how Israel spends a lot of money lobbying the US congressional delegation, so that the US follows Israel's political and economic agenda.

This led to House Democrats accusing Omar of anti-Semitism. As explained in Vox (March 6, 2019) "Omar's comments on Israel keep falling into well-worn anti-Semitic tropes — and her defenders often prove too willing to paper this over and dismiss criticism from even progressive Jews as 'smears'."

In 2019, after the above controversy hit the news, I gave a presentation on cognitive dissonance to a professional group of mediators, who work in the field of collaborative governance. I mentioned this controversy as a place where cognitive dissonance was almost inevitable: Being even mildly critical of Israel's policies toward Palestinians, and the way the US is rarely critical of Israel, generates cognitive dissonance because any criticism of Israel leads to critics being labelled anti-Semitic.

In my presentation, I must have unintentionally conveyed some dismay at the way Representative Omar was treated for her concern about Israel's lobbying practices. I thought I was being neutral, or was my bias slipping through? In any case, one individual quickly stood up and left the room. (If felt bad about this, as I just wanted to explore this example as driven by cognitive dissonance. I didn't want to trigger anyone.)

After the session ended, two other participants (both Jewish) came over to reassure me that the individual who left was militantly pro-Israel, and would not tolerate any criticism of Israel's lobbying. They were both quite critical of Israel's policies, and had to deal with pushback from pro-Israel Jews.

Another example is when a white person criticizes a Black person, the white person can be called a racist. These double-binds create cognitive dissonance. This is another example of polarized thinking, where one either is pro-Israel or anti-Semitic—pro-Black or racist. In this way, cognitive dissonance is often associated with polarized thinking.

(9) **The Relationship between Psychological Conflicts and External Conflicts:**

The relationship between inner and outer conflicts can be quite complex because:

- internal conflicts can trigger external conflict;
- external conflicts can trigger internal conflicts;
- internal conflicts can generate more internal conflicts;
- and external conflicts can generate more external conflicts.

Mapping out the terrain of these conflicts requires that disputants are aware of both their external conflicts and their internal conflicts. This requires a high degree of sensitivity, transparency, and self-knowledge—which may take time and patience to develop, and unfortunately, may trigger fears of vulnerability.

Case Study: I am aware that I am a **highly sensitive person**. In telling my story, I am also demonstrating my transparency and self-knowledge. All three for these character attributes also gives me a sense of vulnerability—which is not particularly appealing to my wife!

As I want to minimize conflicts with my wife, I am conflicted about how much of my emotional life I should share with her. If I minimize these expressions, I have fewer external conflicts. But in minimizing my insecurities, they build up inside me, coming out when they are least welcome at home.

Men are socialized to be strong and protective of their partners. Unfortunately, that means withholding expressions of fear, anxiety, and other unmanly feelings. Some men rebel from these restrictions, but that does not mean that partners aren't disappointed. Socializations slowly change, but that does not mean that, within a particular relationship, (mine, for instance) changes can be made over time. My wife has begun the slow process of accepting my insecurities, and I have slowed down on expressing all of them all of the time!

(10) **Fostering Honesty and Transparency; Minimizing Dishonesty and Confabulation**:

In American society (and perhaps elsewhere), we are socialized to be the **best** at what we do and what we think. We want to impress others about our knowledge, our good works, our competency, our friends and associates. When we get in an argument, we are socialized to win, so we might easily invent some supportive evidence or fictional authority. When we tell a story about some adventure, we often confabulate—or fill-in some fictional details to make the story more interesting. Because of this socialization, we mislead others—sometimes unintentionally.

Ultimately, we want to make the best case for ourselves, putting our self in the best possible light. We market ourselves. It is hard not to do this to some extent, but when it gets misleading and fully dishonest, we are creating a conflict. As smart as we might be about making our stories sound true, our friends, family, and coworkers will figure out that we are exaggerating, or worse, misleading them.

Case Study: **Perception is Reality**: A common example of dishonesty or confabulation is our general tendency to take our personal experience as the gold standard of truth. In the pandemic of 2020, people who did not know anyone with COVID-19 easily became complacent about protecting themselves, and others, from infection. On the other hand, dramatic news stories can lead people to become anxious and panicky, in the other extreme, so that they do not want to leave their homes for any reason.

Epidemiological scientists are constantly revising their recommendations for conducting our lives during the spread of this potentially fatal coronavirus. Therefore, some people think that these constant revisions mean that scientists do not know what they are doing, when actually, these fluctuations are the norm in scientific research involving a novel virus.

Therefore, people can be pulled in three ways: denial, panic, or skepticism. Navigating reality does not deny perception (as perception will always be **part** of reality), but reality is the goal of science, and the record of science, in making reality clearer, is generally pretty solid.

(11) **Positively Engage the Culture War**: At the two ends of the continuum, there are two general temperaments: The first group are people who want to hang onto comfortable, traditional, narratives by conforming to peer group viewpoints. The second group are people who have diverse friends, and welcome having their views challenged by those with different viewpoints. Between these polarized groups are people who populate the space along the continuum. These people have a blend some of the views from both sides.

Our work as conflict facilitators is to soften this cultural divide through CR skills and values. It is key to see the decency in others, finding what we have in common, and what interests we share. It is crucial to listen to their experiences and beliefs, as the first step toward gaining allies for a world, not so violently divided by the culture war.

Case Study: **From Dissent to Political Force**: The American Culture War has a long history. Christopher Columbus, who is often lionized in K-12 school textbooks, was a genocidal murderer of the native people that he "discovered." His own writings confirmed this fact, as well as the writings of a few of his contemporaries who documented Columbus's abuses. This including an outraged Spanish priest, Bartolome de las Casas, who wrote a history of the era of discovery. In it, he chronicles the "domination, oppression, and injustice that the European was inflicting upon the newly discovered peoples." Britannica In doing so, de las Casas became one of the first dissidents in American history.

Since the time of Columbus and other colonists, there has been a continuous history of dissent, which initiates the culture war. This dissent has increased over the centuries, in nearly every quarter of American life, including centuries of dissent in the area of Greenwich Village, New York City. (*The Village: 400 Years of Beats and Bohemians, Radicals and Rogues, 2013*)

However, it remained a minority voice until the 1960s, when it exploded into popular culture, creating a political voice for change, from the abuses of past U.S. history, into a new American Dream of justice, peace, and equality for all. In the 1970s, this social, political, and environmental force began to contend with the forces of the establishment. Since that era, there has been a back-and-forth battle between conservatives and progressives, where each has gained and lost their grip on power.

(12) **Balancing the Map and the Territory with Contextual Thinking**: Abstraction, without context, is the enemy of conflict and collaborative processes. In my opinion, the most problematic strategy for navigating intractable conflicts is an over-reliance on generalization and abstraction (the map), and not enough reliance on situation and context (the territory). The term, "low context," refers to an abundance of generalizations and abstractions, and the term, "high context," refers to specific situations, emotions, experiences, and stories. In other words, we (in the modern, low context, world) have a tendency to rely more on the map than on the territory. Context, and the unique stories that arise from direct experience, give us important information (and human connection) that is not present in abstraction and generalization. A thoughtful integration of abstractions and the specific experiences of the particular people involved in a seemingly intractable conflict are crucial for a positive outcome for the process. We must navigate the space between the map and the territory.

Case Study: **Abstractions Against Experience**:

A. R. Luria (*Cognitive Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1978) interviewed illiterate people, in the remote Russian village of Kashgar, to find out if their illiteracy had any effect on their ability to reason logically. The following is an excerpt from those interviews:

> Luria: Cotton can grow only where it is hot and dry. In England it is cold and damp. Can cotton grow there?
>
> Khamrak: No, if the soil is damp and chilly it can't.
>
> Luria: Now, in England it is damp and chilly. Will cotton grow there?
>
> K's wife: It's chilly here too.
>
> Luria: But there it is always cold and damp. Will cotton grow?
>
> Khamrak: Me, I don't…I don't know what the weather is like there!
>
> Luria: Cotton can't grow where it is cold, and it's cold in England. Does cotton grow there?
>
> Khamrak: I don't know…if it's cold, while if it's hot, it will. From your words, I would have to say that cotton shouldn't grow there. But I would have to know what spring is like there, what kind of nights they have.

Luria is trying to see if the illiterate Khamrak can give a purely logical conclusion to a purely logical argument. Khamrak cannot understand this particular "language game." Wittgenstein pointed out how the meaning of sentences follows rules, as in a game, and that those who do not understand the rules will not be able to understand the sentence as it was intended.

Another way to understand the disconnection between abstraction and context is to use the analogy: "A map *is not* the territory it represents, but, if correct it has a *similar structure* to the territory which accounts for its usefulness." (Korzybski, Algred, 1933, *Science and Sanity*, p. 58.) Khamrak does not understand Luria's "language game," but Khamrak understands abstractions concerning cotton and weather, as well as his local cotton-growing conditions. Interestingly, Khamrak navigates cotton and weather with both abstractions and the particulars of personal experience.

I met a forest ranger who was tasked with updating a recently published map of the ranger's local district. The ranger showed me the trails and roads that no longer existed or were rerouted. The recent map was already out of date! His job was to reconcile the static map with the ever-changing territory.

(13) **Critical Thinking**: What do I think about a certain difference and dilemma? This is difficult to do because our thinking is heavily influenced by other people, our social group, how we grew up, and the influencers in our lives—role models, teachers, mentors, people we follow on social media. Asking

oneself what one really thinks about something, regardless of the views of others, is challenging. The field of critical thinking has developed useful strategies to achieve this.

Case Study One: **The Centrality of Self-Interest in Mediation**

As an illustration of critical thinking, the default setting for thinking about the practice of mediation is to suppose the disputants are primarily motivated by their self-interests and that, by finding common ground, the disputant self-interests can be combined to produce a resolution to their conflicts. If asked about self-interest, people can produce them, even when self-interest is not the primary way that they lead their lives. Mediators have success creating resolutions by this "combining-self-interest" strategy, so why think about changing it?

The other side of the difference/dilemma springs from the view that disputants may not be primarily motivated by self-interest. Therefore, mediation should not always be confined to this "combining-self-interest" strategy. I suggest that mediators ask disputants about their primary motivation that drives this particular conflict.

It is possible that moral reasoning drives each side of the conflict. When disputant moral principles are on the table, then there may be a way to combine these principles to reach a resolution to the conflict at hand.

Furthermore, if one disputant is motivated by moral reasoning and the other disputant is motivated by self-interest, then a new conflict has emerged—and intractability may follow.

Case Study Two: **Abortion Dispute**

Abortion supporters and foes are driven by conflicting moral duties toward a fetus and moral duties about a woman's control of her body. Common purpose between these two groups can be the support for birth control information and access in high schools. In finding a common purpose, members of these two groups can work together, positively, creating a space to share their different experiences and perceptions with abortion.

In social conversations, the disputants can reflect on questions like:

> "Would you want to be born into this world by a woman who was not prepared, nor intended to be, a mother?"
>
> "How does God want us to address overpopulation?"
>
> "Is it always wrong to have sex before marriage?"

Case Study Three: **Divorce that involves young children**:

Let's say that both parents want primary custody because that goal fits their self-interest. At first glance, this looks like an intractable win-lose conflict. However, the mediator may ask the disputants about how much they value the interests of the children. Hopefully, their morality supports honoring the interests of the children. From this, a shared custody plan can be created where time with each parent is designed to maximize the interests of the children.

Case Study Four: **Profit verses Social Justice and Environmental Sustainability**

Businesses are often perceived as primarily self-interested, money-making machines, who are only motivated by legal duties to people and the environment. However, there is a rise in "B Corporations" that balance their profit motive with commitments to social justice and/or the environment. And even businesses, whose explicit goal is profit, can have strong secondary goals for social justice and the environment because of their shared values. In conflicts between businesses and social or environmental justice, the moral landscape of businesses should not be stereotyped as apathetic or hostile to moral values.

(14) **Curiosity and Comfort with Difference**: Some people are satisfied with how they think about things, and are not eager to think differently. Clearly, their posture is to disagree with other views, and either try to convince other people that they are wrong, or ignore the differences. Other people may be curious and comfortable learning about views, different from their own. Still other people may, at times be resistant to other views, or open to other views, depending on their mood.

If we are going to navigate the space between our differences (or the horns of the dilemma at hand) we will need to develop some curiosity and comfort with the issue, even when we have been uncomfortable and not curious in the past. The goal is to keep the conversation on an even keel, being respectful and genuinely interested in the other person's viewpoint, reasoning, and experience. A key element is to discuss the issue in a comfortable location without distractions, without an audience or eavesdroppers.

Case Study: **Compassion for the experiences that drive white supremacy**:

One of the driving forces in identity creation and sustainability are the beliefs and values of family, friends, and fellow workers. White supremacists, like other identity groups, thrive where there are concentrations of other white supremacists, who are friends, family, and fellow workers. If one does

not have any positive exposure to people who are not white supremacists, then that identity will likely be uninterrupted.

A friend and colleague of mine, Randy Blazak PhD, grew up in the area where the Ku Klux Klan originated, so he adopted their beliefs, not knowing of alternatives. When he went to university, he came to know diverse peoples, and saw his prejudice for what it is—an ideology of hate and oppression.

Professor Blazak has spent his academic career working to expose the problems of white supremacy, and working with white supremacists to encourage positive views of non-white people, and other excluded groups, including feminist women. He claims that one way that white supremacists change their views and affiliations is by falling in love with a strong woman, who explains that white supremacy does not treat women as equals.

(15) **Engaged Thinking and Experiencing**: What do other people think about, and experience, differences and dilemmas? How can we talk with people who disagree with us on any issue? Thinking together across differences can be a useful way to navigate this dilemma.

Getting people, with different viewpoints, think together on controversial issues is not easy, as it can easily spiral into an emotional argument. Conflict processes that focus on "I-statements," avoiding "You-statements," being mindful, patient, validating, curious, and kind, can be helpful in avoiding arguments and defensiveness. One way to get other people to think across their differences, together, is to have a pool of friends and family who are open to this process. Admittedly, getting a group of people together, outside of a classroom, is a rare occurrence. It might be all one can do to find another person, who takes a different position on this dilemma, and have an emotionally regulated conversation.

How does listening to, and validating other's experiences, help us navigate the differences and dilemmas? Experiences are often quite interesting, and they can explain a lot about people. Connecting with others, across our different experiences, can be difficult, but our imagination and compassion can help bridge the divide.

Case Study: **Thinking Together about Abortion**:

When it comes to abortion, people have many different experiences. My girlfriend, in the early 1970s, got pregnant. Neither one of us were ready to be parents in our early 20s, so she got an abortion, as our birth control method failed. It was painful, on many levels, and probably contributed to the end of our relationship. She became a nurse and spent most of her career working in an abortion clinic.

Not surprisingly, she has remained pro-choice, but recognizes a woman's painful and difficult decision to have, or not have, an abortion. Therefore, she has great compassion for women making this choice. I agreed with my friends choice, and have attended demonstrations to protect women's access to abortion. I am fortunate that we remain close friends to this day, as she introduced me to my wife, and lives on a horse ranch, where my step-granddaughter rides horses.

When women need someone to talk to someone about abortion, I would recommend my friend as a sympathetic resource, since she has known so many women in this circumstance. The two of them could quite productively think together about abortion because my friend has built her compassion around such a wide experience base.

(16) **The View from Judgment and the View from Compassion**: How do we navigate between these two views by establishing the contrasting views of judgment and compassion? Some of us are driven by our judgmental views; some of us are driven by our compassionate views; others of us try to use these two views to construct a space to navigate the differences, conflicts, and dilemmas. The field of conflict processes encourages us to adopt the latter strategy.

Case Study: **Partner Killed by a Drunk Driver**:

One of my student's husband was killed by a drunk driver. In my forgiveness course, there was a video of a woman who forgave her husband's killer. My student was outraged and deeply disturbed by this video. Prior to showing this video, I said that watching it was optional, but she wanted to see it. She could not even conceive of the possibility of forgiving her husband's killer. Just thinking that there was some social pressure to forgive her husband's killer, assaulted her core, because the wound of this death was still so fresh in her mind and heart.

My student's emotional judgment made sense to me, and I apologized for the effect that the video had on her. We remained on friendly terms, but this case underscored that, on the continuum between forgiveness and unforgiveness, some people may only be able to experience a slightly less

unforgiveness, and never achieve anything like forgiveness. Who are we to judge people that are unforgiving to this extent? I hope that we will not judge them, and show them the same compassion that we might give the killer, who may also be experiencing fathomless suffering.

(17) **Forgiveness and Unforgiveness**: Controversial issues can trigger memories of forgiveness and unforgiveness. How does becoming more forgiving or more unforgiving help us navigate these differences and this dilemma?

Case Study: **Passive Aggression Unforgiveness:**

In many cases, I have been seemingly unforgiven for violating some social group norm, and found myself uninvited to group activities and events. This unforgiveness was done in a passive aggressive way. I was just not included in the invitations. No one complained to me that I had violated a group norm.

There is often an alpha personality who determines who to invite into a group and who to exclude. This alpha personality can simply make a case for inclusion or exclusion, in subtle ways. by telling either positive stories (for inclusion) or negative stories (for exclusion). Challenging the alpha personality, from within the group, is dangerous, because the challenger might find themself also excluded.

(18) **Cultural Dogmatism and Cultural Relativism**: Strong social, cultural, and experiential pressures can make us dogmatic, resistant to change. Different cultures can have views that are relative to their history that is different from the histories of other cultures. How can we overcome dogmatism and the way that cultural relativism resists efforts to embrace broader moral frameworks?

Case Study: **“It’s right, if it makes you happy.”** Making moral decisions on the basis of happiness is enshrined on the United States Declaration of Independence, which states our right to pursue “Life,

Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Individualism is also a strong cultural force that blends with our aspiration to live, free, and happy. However, who pays to protect these freedoms? The military and the police pay dearly to protect us from our enemies and criminals. Frontline workers, our medical personnel, our food service workers, our factory and delivery workers, have pay for our freedoms with their health and, at times, their lives. Too often, they are literally paid too little to give the rest of us our happiness, while sacrificing their own.

(19) **Fixed Identity and Fluid Identity (Hybridization):** As conflict and collaboration facilitators, we might wonder how to have our own judgments, and be open to other judgments, without this flexibility undermining our identity.

Case Study: **"If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything."** (Attributed to Alexander Hamilton in Forbes Magazine) There is a problem of having an identity that is perceived as too fluid. Those, unaware of conflict resolution, can easily view our judgement-flexibility as unwillingness to stand for anything. However, I have both Trump-supporting friends and Antifa friends, where I can validate some of each group's concerns—to a certain degree. I certainly do not condone violence, but I think of myself as a democratic-antifascist-anti-authoritarian, anti-racist, and I find that if I speak of myself that way, I can find many points of agreement on both sides of the spectrum. I have problems with militarism, violence, capitalism, socialism, hierarchies, wealth divides, corrupt unions, dishonest marketing practices, and environmental insensitivity. And it turns out that a lot of people have at least some of these problems.

(20) **Balancing Neutrality with Advocacy**: We can be neutral to the process, while being an advocate for power sharing and ethical responsibility. However, this is a delicate balance! Conflict resolution is fundamentally about human decency. We are committed to creating a space where people can resolve their conflicts, as equals, and members of an egalitarian community.

However, we are not oblivious to the inequality woven into the fabric of our society. In any conflict, there are layers of power differences, cultural biases, and the potential for condescension and manipulation. Therefore, conflict workers need to maintain their commitment to ethical outcomes of CR processes. The central CR strategy is to soften differences between disputants, and create allies for the project of human kindness and decency.

Case Study: **Environmental Advocacy and Conflict Resolution**: What is a conflict resolver supposed to do, when a mediation between industry leaders, government officials, and environmental groups results in an agreement that seems to undermine some environmental protections. The environmental groups, present, might depend on funding from sources, sympathetic to the needs of industry and/or government agencies. They might consider this decision to be a tradeoff for other subsequent advocacies. How does the mediator feel about this, ethically? The mediator has just mediated an environmental injustice. Do mediators need to feel–as lawyers sometimes feel—that their job is just part of a process, not the end result? Can the process be moral and the end result immoral?

(21) **The Material Success and Morality Continua**: Some people have a deep commitment to material success, and only a shallow commitment to morality. On the other hand, some people have a deep commitment to morality, and only a shallow commitment to material success.

Case Study: David Brooks, in ***Bobos*** *(Bourgeois Bohemians)* ***in Paradise***, makes the case that American families are often divided, so that men are socialized to be more heavily committed to success, while women are socialized to be more committed to morality. Of course, commitments to success and morality can take many forms, and evolve over one's lifetime. Interestingly, the vast majority of PSU's Conflict Resolution students have been, and continue to be, women.

Narcissistic, sociopathic, or psychopathic people are fully focused on success, with no concern for ethics. On the other hand, people can be so focused on morality that they ignore their financial affairs to such an extent that they undermine their future security.

Conflicts emerge when family members diverge deeply on their commitments to success and morality. Resolving these conflicts can be difficult because they often reflect a family member's the deeper identity. Workmates may also diverge greatly on these priorities, creating deep divides and inequities within organizations.

What is the Academic and Practitioner Field of Conflict Resolution?

The academic field's name is debatable and unsettled. Different academic programs vary on how they title the field. We, at Portland State University, have chosen "Conflict Resolution" because our original

name “Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies” was perceived as too controversial in the early 1990s because the word, “peace” was stereotyped as “not supporting our troops” in the Gulf War, after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.

Ironically and sadly, there is considerable evidence that the Gulf War was not precipitated by the invasion, but by Kuwait’s over-extracting oil from the Ramaila Oil Fields underneath the border of Iraq and Kuwait. The dispute, which led to the Gulf War, could have been resolved peacefully; if the Kuwaitis had admitted that they were violating the sovereignty of Iraq by their over-extracting oil that was rightfully Iraq’s. With further irony, the larger field of peace studies could have, potentially, provided international negotiating techniques to avert the Gulf War. As the following report from the New York Times in 1990 explains, there was a window for negotiating a settlement of the dispute that would have avoided the war.

> Henry M. Schuler, director of the energy security program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said that, from the Iraqi viewpoint, the Kuwait Government was ”acting aggressively—it was economic warfare.”
>
> ”Whether he’s Hitler or not, he has some reason on his side,” Mr. Schuler said of President Hussein. He added that American officials needed to appreciate the economic and psychological significance the Rumaila field holds for the Iraqis and why Kuwait’s exploitation of Rumaila, in addition to its high oil output in the 1980’s, was an affront to the Iraqis.

Thomas C. Hayes, New York Times, Sept. 3, 1990

How Shall We Conceptualize and Define Our Field?

Good question!

The following names offer good examples of the labeling dilemmas associated with our field:

Conflict Resolution is how our field is often described, generated from the advocacy of resolving conflicts outside of the courtroom.

Conflict Studies is another common way of describing our field, joining other “studies” programs in higher education (Women Studies, Black Studies, Native American Studies, Latina/o Studies, Environmental Studies, Queer Studies)

Conflict Transformation is a newer way of describing our field, emphasizing the changed ways that disputants can understand a conflict and each other.

Conflict Analysis is a name that focuses on the research and theorizing in our field.

Conflict Facilitation is a name that I like because it focuses on the process of working with conflict.

Collaborative Processes is another name that I like because it opens up our field to a wide array of collaborative work.

Certainly, there are other names and conceptualizations that lead to variations of definition. This diversity is probably healthy, and there is no particular need to agree on only one name or definition.

It would be easy if we simply agreed to define conflict resolution by saying that it is the field where people resolve conflicts. Of course, this is true, but not too helpful. Those of us whose profession involves resolving conflicts have no problem recognizing that our field is often called conflict resolution. However, for those people who are not familiar with the field, we have not helped them with our tautological definition. We need to say more.

One simple—no doubt too simple—definition of *conflict resolution* is to contrast it with *conflict polarization*. In conflict polarization, the conflict is determined to be of the kind that one side is right and the other side is wrong. When a conflict is polarized, it needs to be divided into positions that can be judged as either right or wrong—or more right against more wrong. On the other hand, conflict resolution does not seek this division. Rather, conflict resolution is a process intended to facilitate the reframing of the conflict, so that the differing positions' polarization diminishes, in favor of mutual understanding and harmonized interests.

One problem that emerges from this definition is how do we know when it is appropriate to resolve or polarize a conflict? Martin Luther King used conflict polarization when he helped dramatize a conflict as right against wrong. This polarization led to sympathy for the cause of civil rights, and skepticism toward segregation and separate development. In this case, conflict polarization helped African Americans gain rights, respect, and inclusion into the American Dream.

We also use conflict polarization within conflict resolution processes when a ground rule is enforced. Interruptions are wrong and careful listening is right.

Additionally, conflict resolution seems to depend on all parties agreeing to the reframing process. If one party is using the conflict resolution process for adversarial ends—always on the lookout for the BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement), then it seems that all parties have to keep adversarial ends and processes in sight. In cases of power difference, the weaker side might also benefit from an adversarial solution—which depends on conflict polarization.

Labor-management conflicts seem to fall into the zone of alternately polarizing and resolving. Does this mean that the ultimate end of both conflict resolution and conflict polarization is to defend one's interests? Doesn't this goal play into the problem of special interests competing with each other? Where does the collective or greater good come in? What mechanism do we have to determine the greater good?

At Portland State University, the union that represents core faculty members (AAUP—American Association of University Professors) took the position that PSU should invest in faculty salaries and benefits by decreasing or eliminating other investments because the faculty represent the core interest of the university. The administration (also professors) took the position that a serious urban university should maintain all of its investments and that the union was not taking all of the interests of an urban university into account. End of discussion—it became a fight. Conflict polarization was embraced by both sides—in style and content. Contract negotiations went into a second year. And an Oregon University System budget cut wiped out all talk of increased investments in anything.

One consequence of this conflict is that the notion of *investments* is now on people's lips. Is this notion helpful as a way of reframing the conflict? Investment talk leads to productivity talk, and higher education is often about intellectual enrichment, rather than productivity. And teaching is often a calling, rather than a lucrative career path.

From this example, it seems that conflict polarization alone does not resolve conflict—there needs to be some kind of negotiation, some kind of reframing, so that a new basis of understanding the different interests and perspectives is created. However, this example also shows that conflict polarization is not the opposite of conflict resolution. Rather, conflict resolution may require varying degrees of polarization.

So, where does this meditation take us? We started out trying to define conflict resolution by opposing it with conflict polarization. Then, using examples, we find that, at least in some cases, conflict polarization is part of conflict resolution. What might be a better way to define conflict resolution?

A second try at a definition might be to suggest that *conflict resolution* addresses conflict nonviolently, using reframing as a key part of the process; whereas *conflict obliteration* addresses conflict violently by trying to destroy or silence the perceived source of the conflict. What worries do we have about this second definition?

One problem with this definition is that not all of the people in conflict resolution are pacifists. Some conflict resolvers believe that those committing genocide must be stopped, violently, if necessary. On their view, genocide is a conflict where the perpetrators must be silenced in their hate speech and hateful killing, and the perpetrators must be killed if they cannot otherwise be stopped from their genocidal operations.

Let's return to the original question about the definition of conflict resolution, and ask about our purpose in defining the field. We supposed that those people, who don't know about the field, need to have a definition in order to be clear on what we do. However, if we have a singular, though limited, definition, we may confuse people more than clear up the confusion. If people have the misconception that conflict resolution is a field where touchy-feely hippies try to wish away the ills of the world, then we need to address this concern by describing the actual practices of the field. If they think that conflict facilitation is a field where white people are trying to mediate conflicts amongst other white people, then we need to explain how almost all cultures and peoples throughout the world have conflict practices. From this, we might suppose that a singular definition is not helpful to people trying to get past misconceptions of the field.

However, there may be professional reasons to define the field so that it is distinguished from other fields that are not conflict resolution. The problem with this is that there are a number of practices that are subsumed under the heading of conflict resolution. One such practice is mediation, and it is becoming increasingly professionalized, so that there is a need to distinguish it from therapy and the adversarial practice of law. From a professional legitimacy point of view, conflict resolution may eventually be the overarching term for a set of carefully defined professions, like mediation, restorative justice, international negotiation, peace-building, and so on.

Over time, that set of practices will probably continue to grow—and the term, "conflict resolution," might stick, or another term like "conflict transformation" or conflict management might come to be used. In any case, the term that is chosen will need to address the need for an overarching term. This need is likely to arise from the need to distinguish professional practices for the consumer public, the legal status of the profession, and the way that fees are collected—including the role of insurance companies and public agencies.

Those of us, who believe that Western notions of professionalism, consumerism, individualism, economic and environmental scarcity may be creating some of the underlying conflicts in the world, may worry about how professionalization might, itself, be ill equipped to address these underlying conflicts. In this scenario, there may emerge a new field of conflict processes—with a new mandate—that does not fall victim to these Western notions and problems.

Academic Context of this Text:

Broadly speaking, this text offers a unique approach to the field of Conflict Analysis. This approach focuses on difficult dilemmas that are embedded in a wide diversity of conflicts, whether international or local, big or small. The current field of Conflict Analysis seeks to describe, diagnose, and prescribe solutions and resolutions to specific conflicts, often international violence or civil strife. Conventional

analysis is done with supposed, unbiased, empirical, methods. This text suggests that any conflict analysis is done by analysts, whom have a location within the context of the conflict being analyzed. This means that all analysts have biases due to their cultural location of their analysis. When an analyst develops a capacity to understand their cultural location from the perspective of another cultural location, a dilemma emerges that is not easy to navigate.

Analyst Neutrality is Impossible

Given this situatedness, any denial of it, or any attempt to get outside of it, into some form of "neutrality," only diminishes the potential connection and community amongst disputants and conflict interveners. It can be shown that such connection and community create trust in the conflict analysis, and deviations from such connection and community can easily reduce trust. This conclusion follows the insight that the perceived status or wisdom of the conflict intervener does little to create genuine trust and community. In addition, the science of the intervener comes with cultural assumptions and power dynamics that can generate mistrust in disputants who might not have the same cultural assumptions and who resent the power that research culture has over cultures with diminished power.

The Dilemma of Conflict Intervention

In large scale conflicts and warfare, disputants are enemies and each community, represented, has loyal partisans that create community power and strength. A conflict intervener lacks this sense of partisan affiliation, which diminishes understanding and trust. Furthermore, a conflict intervener may represent a cultural, political, or economic interest that may have a history of taking advantage of the conflict at hand. At the very least, conflict interveners are perceived by disputants as just another interested disputant. Consequently, the conflict becomes more complex with the additional "disputant," playing the role of a neutral agent. Obviously, this creates a dilemma that must be effectively navigated, if collaborative progress is the genuine goal with the intervention, not victory.

Progress on Seemingly Intractable Dilemmas

This text gives insights on how to create helpful connections between disputants and interveners by finding the seemingly intractable dilemmas between them. Navigating these dilemmas can help stakeholders enter a negotiation space where differences are placed on a gridded continuum, always grounded by specific contextual information, narratives, and conversations.

Generating Positive Motion for Intractability

By attending to the specific context of the conflict, and helping provide a multi-perspectival

understanding of the conflict, interventionists can help disputants avoid the easy polarities or moral judgments built into the conflict. The intervention process is led by compassionately working through relevant continua within the space of difference. Movement along these stratifications widens the negotiating space, improving the potential for connection and meaningful communication. I suggest that this is the most helpful strategy for addressing one of the most difficult dilemmas of all—creating peace without sacrificing justice—and creating justice, without sacrificing peace.

Destructive and Constructive Approaches to Conflict

Conflict can be addressed in a number of ways, some are authoritarian and destructive, and while others can be addressed with collaborative and constructive approaches. Each of the existing constructive approaches is valuable and appropriate in certain contexts, so I am not suggesting that the approach I offer is a replacement for any of those current approaches. I am only suggesting an additional approach which might be valuable in some contexts.

The approaches, that we have now, are listed from destructive (first four) to constructive (second four), as follows. The eighth approach, on the constructive list, is the approach which I am offering as a new conflict resolution method.

Destructive approaches to conflict:

1. Ignore the conflict and hope that it goes away, giving way to the status quo.
2. Forcefully suppress the conflict, and hope that such suppression will intimidate the opposing disputant(s).
3. Undermine or destroy the integrity of the opposing disputant(s) to diminish their experience, viewpoint, and history.
4. Defeat the opposing disputant(s) by employing a powerful hierarchy, court of law or popular opinion.

Constructive approaches to conflict:

- Frame the conflict as a problem this is best **resolved** through finding an answer to the problem.
- Frame the conflict as a fractured relationship that is best **mended** by working on relationship issues.
- Frame the conflict as a narrative difference that is best **integrated** through finding common

aspects of each other's narratives.

- Frame the conflict as a difference in the space-between us to be **navigated** on the spectrum of various continua.

In suggesting what I take to be a new approach to conflict, I am recommending that people who wish to work more effectively with conflict might learn how to navigate the space between conflicting viewpoints or perceptions, whether those are external or internal to the individual. Navigating conflicts between oneself and others, and within oneself, is not defaulting to one of the following:

Convincing oneself that a certain position, perspective, principle, argument, or value is **correct** and an opposing view is **incorrect**;

Believing that the perspective, principle, argument, or value of a person in authority (or a highly regarded writing) is **correct**—and that one's own is **incorrect**.

Giving in to a **habit**, or a familiar idea or thought, rather than **trying out a new idea or thought**.

I am suggesting that the current practices of collaborative processes may not be sufficient for all cases of conflict. Finding solutions to problems, working on relationship issues, and integrating narratives certainly work in some kinds of conflicts. However, **there are conflicts that have complex and changing dynamics, much as the confluence of two rivers. In these conflicts, a space needs to be created to negotiate different points on several continua, resisting the polarities that are so common in Western languages, where right/wrong, good/bad, strong/weak, kind/mean, sensitive/insensitive, aggravate the conflict with further polarization, obstructing understanding or resolution.**

Working with conflict as a liquid engagement (not the collision of two solid, seemingly irreconcilable forces), but like swimming in changing currents of the dynamics of difference, can be more appropriate for complex conflicts that occupy different levels of sensibility and consciousness.

To navigate constantly changing dynamics of conflict, one needs to focus in on the complex sensibility of the people involved, as one must focus in on the complex sensibility of oneself. Of course, some of one's and others' sensibility may be hidden, so finding the sensibility of oneself and others is an ongoing process of discovery.

In addition, conflict workers must watch the ongoing drama of their own (and others') cognitive dissonance that disrupts the easy flow of our lives. Awareness of the dynamics of cognitive dissonance opens up the possibility for navigating between the horns of emerging dilemmas. After locating this dissonance, one must resist one's impulse to take one side against the other, just as one must resist

the impulse to project the dissonance onto another person, and create an external conflict that is easily transformed into a competition, a contest to win the argument, rather than use the argument to explore all of dimensions that might be present.

To more easily navigating the space between disputants (or one's inner narrative), one must construct numerous continua between polarities, rather than default to one polarity or the other. Translating polarities into continua helps create a space between differences that can be navigated without the claustrophobia of working within deeply contrasted polarities of difference. In this way, conflict workers must be aware of the challenge of cognitive dissonance, where everyone (including conflict workers) have a tendency to shut down differences, where there might be validity on both sides

I find that a useful continuum that helps me address a conflict, or a difficult situation, is to regularly embrace two radically different viewpoints: the view from judgment and the view from compassion. We are all seemingly conditioned to rather easily form a view from judgment and defend it against other judgments. However, to fully actualize our capacity for empathy, we must learn to construct a view from compassion—which may take much more work. After construction this particular continuum in a conflict, one cannot simply take a neutral stand and sit on the fence. Navigating the space between means that sometimes we must push ourselves more towards the compassionate view, and sometimes we must push ourselves more toward the judgmental view. Sometimes, we also need to reach out and learn other people's judgmental and compassionate views. This practice of finding both the views from judgment and compassion helps us resist our cognitive dissonance-driven tendency to default to the view from judgment.

In summary, I am recommending a process for navigating differences and dilemmas by incorporating the following elements that can change, creating the movement needed to overcome intractability:

1. The unique and changeability of context of the difference, dilemma, or conflict;
2. The unique and changeability experiences of the disputants;
3. The unique and changeability physical space of where the collaborative process is taking place;
4. The individual and changeable perceptions of power and comfort amongst disputants;
5. The unique and changeable narratives and backgrounds of disputants;
6. Opening up a dialogic space to explore, expand, and enlarge the possibilities for navigating differences and dilemmas.
7. Resisting polar, abstract categorizations of differences, dilemmas, perceptions, experiences, narratives, conflicts. Substituting context and conceptual continua for abstractions and

polarizations.

What are conflict processes?

Whereas conflict processes are often defined as a general term for many methods of addressing conflict, including legal processes, it is more the case, currently, to understand conflict processes as an alternative to legal processes. Formally, these alternatives are mediation, negotiation, or facilitation, usually assisted by a professional, who is independent from the dispute. Arbitration is sometimes considered to be an alternative to a legal process, however, arbitrators are often lawyers or judges, who make decisions in administrative processes that are not technically legal, but are decided by the arbitrator, rather than decided by the disputants, as in mediation, negotiation, or facilitation.

It seems that conflict processes, understood as alternatives to adversarial processes, should be clearly defined to show how they are an alternative. If adversarial processes are necessarily win-lose, then the alternative processes should be win-win, in the long run, if not the short run. Win-win processes seem to require collaboration between disputants that is either **self**-facilitated/mediated or **other**-facilitated/mediated. “Collaboration” means that the disputants are working together to make progress successfully addressing a conflict between them. Of course, win-win and win-lose are opposite ends of a continuum that needs to be navigated. Normally, there is no perfect win-win, nor perfect win-lose. Most processes, that address conflicts and differences, conclude with some combination of win-win and win-lose. For me, the goal is to maximize collaboration, understanding, and empathy, regardless of how much winning or losing takes place. The metaphors of winning and losing actually promote the framework of competition, which is diametrically opposed to collaboration.

Collaboration is important here because if empowers, and provides skills to, disputants, so that they can better manage their conflicts in the future. This empowerment helps the wider culture navigate differences and conflict better, so that our greater society can better connect across the divisions that emphasize our lack of community. Our justice system is expensive for both taxpayers and business entities. Decreasing our use of the justice system, by using collaborative processes, lightens the weight of government, creates stronger communities, and empowers individuals to productively address difference and conflict.

The term, “processes,” in “conflict processes” suggests a process that tidily delivers a happy ending to a conflict. In my opinion, this understanding is misleading—and if that is the common understanding of the term, then the term is not a good one for our field. In practice, even properly managed conflicts might not end happily, nor end at all, as some conflicts need to continue full force, and perhaps even escalate, in order for positive change to occur, where all parties understand the depth of the conflict, and for change to be more than cosmetic. Martin Luther King, though a pacifist, needed to escalate the

conflicts concerning civil rights for African Americans. Any effort to prematurely resolve that conflict would have amounted to pacification and marginalization.

Real change often requires the identity transformation of disputants, to such a degree, that turning-point processes would seriously undermine that change. Some practitioners and authors have suggested other terms to help address the problems with the word, "processes," such as, conflict "transformation," conflict "management," or conflict "studies." The term, "transformation," suggests that the goal of conflict processes is always fundamental change within each disputant. However, this is not always the goal of disputants, who often just want problems solved. The term, "management," suggests a process akin to labor/management negotiations, where mediators see themselves as acting as surrogate "managers." This would present an unfortunate spin toward control from above, when conflict processes should necessarily be collaborative.

Respecting the "conflict" is conflict processes:

Generally, those of us who advocate collaborative processes take the position that conflict can be a good thing. Certainly, in many contexts, conflict is bad because it is violent, oppressive, and silencing. However, certain conflicts are good because they promote a respect for diversity and the elimination of violence, injustice, and war, as well as increasing social, economic, environmental justice. By taking a position on the goodness of these kinds of conflicts—and the badness of other kinds of conflicts—those who advocate collaborative processes are not neutral.

Some people might object to this position, saying that if those who advocate for collaborative process are perceived as working for justice, peace, and diversity—and condemning injustice, war, and the lack of diversity, then they will not be trusted to be neutral mediators or facilitators of conflict processes. I am respectful of this perception, but I reject isolated neutrality because it masks the privileges, entitlements, and structural violence of oppressive and colonizing cultures, of which the U.S. continues to be. The disadvantaged within colonized cultures often recognize the privilege behind "neutrality."

The conundrum, and dilemma, is this: CR's *advocacy* can threaten the privileged, and CR's *neutrality* can threaten those who see privilege behind that neutrality. I think there is a way to navigate this dilemma. The cultures of Western Civilization, along with most other cultures, value justice, peace, and diversity. However, different *cultures* understand these terms differently, just like different *individuals* understand these terms differently. Some understand justice and peace through military and economic strength—some understand justice and peace through nonviolence and dialogue. Some understand diversity more narrowly than others. Collaborative processes can embrace these differences of understanding through dialogue. Sometimes this dialogue will lead to constructive resolutions;

sometimes it will just be a listening session, and sometimes the dialogue will illuminate the need to escalate the conflict into the wider culture.

In dialogue, those whose voices have been silenced by oppression and marginalization can have a voice. Those who have been victims of injustice, war, and a lack of diversity can have a voice—and be heard by those whose understanding of justice, peace, and diversity might be challenged by previously silenced voices. The movie, "Up in the Air," used people who had actually lost their jobs as actors in the drama of a man who had the job of firing people. When the audience watches this fictional film, they see real people who have lost their jobs—and hear them voice their real feelings.

This encounter can be transformative in that it facilitates a process where people dive deeper into the realities of others. It is the faith of collaborative processes that within this listening process, the most radical changes can occur. Changes that can end wars, bring about social, economic, and environmental justice, and create a commitment to the more inclusive forms of diversity.

Conflict workers not conflict resolvers:

Because of my concerns, listed above, I prefer to call people who help facilitate conflict processes be called, "conflict workers," not conflict resolvers. Furthermore, I prefer the term, "collaborative processes," as the overarching term for this field of work and study.

What are collaborative processes?

Some practitioners and authors call this professional and academic field "collaborative processes." I am one of those academics. In my opinion, collaborative processes are larger than mediation and negotiation, the normal focus of conflict processes programs. Additionally, collaborative processes do not necessarily lead to processes of transformation, or even any kind of immediate positive change. Collaborative processes might even **reject** processes, transformation, or any significant positive change, in favor of simply giving disputants a chance to work together, to listen to each other, to gain perspective on the conflict, and to demonstrate a commitment (even if small) to working together over an extended period of time. Commitments to ongoing collaboration keeps disputants from immediately seeking adversarial or contractual power to determine how an endpoint might be forced onto the conflict. Forcing an endpoint to disputes, before collaboration has been has had a chance to be successful, may escalate the conflict or transform it into a new territory or sphere.

What is not conflict processes?

As mentioned above, adversarial processes are win-lose processes that are decided by empowered

authorities in non-collaborative ways. In other words, disputants do not get any opportunities to help create a win-win solution to a conflict. In purely adversarial processes, disputants are at the mercy of (not necessarily merciful) decisions by authorities. Adversarial processes do not seek to empower disputants to navigate their difference, but rather, these processes seek to determine who wins their case, and who loses their case, on legal or other merits. That said, adversarial processes may be hybridized with collaborative processes. Small claims courts often send disputants to professional mediators, hired by the court, to settle their dispute collaboratively. Lawyers for opposing disputants may facilitate settlement processes, where disputants settle their dispute (usually in monetary terms) outside of judicial decision-making.

What are not collaborative processes?

Non-collaborative processes are those that prevent disputants from working together, as equals, to address their conflicts and differences. Managerial processes may reject collaborative processes, as might union processes, preferring to let contracts, policies, or authorities drive decisions. A boss might want to dominate, as might a spouse, family member, or friend with strong or assertive personalities.

Even when a process is designed to be collaborative, many factors may interfere with everyone, in the process, being treated as equals. Cultures, that are rigidly hierarchical, may undermine collaboration by virtue of religious or traditional ways that power is vested in a structure, person, or role. Some participants may be more or less knowledgeable about details of the dispute. Some participants may be friends or family members, while other participants may be relative strangers.

What is the relationship between the terms "conflict processes" and "collaborative processes"?

As I have written, above, there are some distinctions, and overlaps, in the way that these two terms have been used in practice and in academic programs. For the purposes of this book, I will often use the terms interchangeably, except in the cases where I am focusing on the distinctions between them.

How shall we define" conflict resolution"?

It would be easy if we simply defined conflict resolution by saying that it is the field where people resolve conflicts. Of course, this is true, but not too helpful, given the diverse kinds of conflict processes. Those of us whose profession involves working with conflicts have no problem recognizing that our field is often called "conflict resolution." However, for those people who are not familiar with the field, we have not helped them with our tautological definition. We need to say more.

One simple—no doubt too simple—definition of *conflict resolution* is to contrast it with *conflict*

polarization. In conflict polarization, the conflict is determined to be of the kind where one side is right and the other side is wrong. When a conflict is polarized, it needs to be divided into positions that can be judged as either right or wrong—or more-right against more-wrong. On the other hand, conflict resolution does not seek this division. Rather, conflict resolution is a process intended to facilitate the reframing of the conflict, so that the differing positions' polarization diminishes, in favor of mutual understanding and harmonized interests.

One problem that emerges from this definition is how do we know when it is appropriate to resolve or polarize a conflict? Martin Luther King used conflict polarization when he helped dramatize a conflict as right against wrong. This polarization led to sympathy for the cause of civil rights, and skepticism toward segregation and separate development. In this case, conflict polarization helped African Americans gain rights, respect, and inclusion into the American Dream.

We also use conflict polarization within conflict resolution processes when a ground rule is enforced. Interruptions are wrong and careful listening is right. Mediators and facilitators must enforce ground rules or the process may fall apart.

Additionally, conflict resolution seems to depend on all parties being made aware that the conflict, at hand, may best be reframed as an adversarial, polarized conflict, not a resolvable conflict. In other words, a conflict resolution process that is underway may need to be interrupted and changed into an adversarial process. It may also be the case that one party is using the conflict resolution process for adversarial ends—always on the lookout for the BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement); therefore, it seems that all parties have to keep adversarial ends and processes in sight. There are many types of conflicts that might be more productively addressed by adversarial means. For example, in cases of power difference, the weaker side might also benefit from an adversarial solution—which depends on conflict polarization. Also, labor-management conflicts seem to fall into the zone of alternately adversarial and resolvable.

Does this mean that the ultimate end of both conflict resolution and conflict polarization is to defend one's interests? Doesn't this goal play into the problem of selfish interests competing with each other? Where does the common good come in? What mechanism do we have to determine the common good?

At PSU, the union that represents core faculty members (AAUP—American Association of University Professors) took the position that PSU should invest in faculty salaries and benefits by decreasing or eliminating other investments because the faculty represent the core interest of the university. The administration (also professors) took the position that a serious urban university should maintain all of its investments and that the union was not taking all of the interests of an urban university into account. End of discussion—it became a fight. Conflict polarization was embraced by both sides—in style and

content. Contract negotiations went into a second year. Then an Oregon University System budget cut wiped out all talk of increased investments in anything.

One consequence of this conflict is that the notion of *investments* is now on people's lips. Is this notion helpful as a way of reframing the conflict? Investment talk leads to productivity talk, whereas higher education is traditionally about intellectual enrichment, rather than productivity. And teaching is often a calling, rather than a lucrative career path.

From this example, it seems that conflict polarization alone does not resolve conflict—there needs to be some kind of negotiation, some kind of reframing, so that a new basis of understanding the different interests and perspectives is created. However, this example also shows that conflict polarization is not the opposite of conflict resolution. Rather, conflict resolution may require varying degrees of polarization, and conflict polarization may require varying degrees of conflict resolution.

So, where does this meditation take us? We started out trying to define conflict resolution by opposing it with conflict polarization. Then, using an example, we find that, at least in some cases, conflict polarization is part of conflict resolution.

What might be a better way to define "conflict resolution"?

A second try at a definition might be to suggest that *conflict resolution* addresses conflict nonviolently, using reframing as a key part of the process; whereas *conflict obliteration* addresses conflict violently by trying to destroy or silence the perceived source of the conflict. What worries do we have about this second definition?

One problem with this definition is that not all of the people in conflict resolution are pacifists. Some conflict resolvers believe that those committing genocide must be stopped, violently, if necessary. On their view, genocide is a conflict where the perpetrators must be silenced in their hate speech, and killed if they cannot otherwise be stopped from their genocidal operations.

Let's return to the original question about the definition of conflict resolution, and ask about our purpose in defining the field. We supposed that those people, who don't know about the field, need to have a definition in order to be clear on what we do. However, if we have a singular definition, we may not be able to address their lack of clarity. If they think that conflict resolution is a field of touchy-feely hippies trying to wish away the ills of the world, then we need to address this concern by describing the successful practices of the field. If they think that conflict resolution is a field where white people are trying to mediate conflicts amongst other white people, then we need to explain how almost all cultures and peoples have conflict resolution practices. From this, we might suppose that a singular definition is not helpful to people trying to get past misconceptions of the field.

However, there may be professional reasons to define the field so that it is distinguished from other fields that are not conflict resolution. There are already a number of practices that are subsumed under the heading of conflict resolution. One such practice is mediation, and it is becoming increasingly professionalized, so that there is a need to distinguish it from therapy and the adversarial practice of law. From a professional legitimacy point of view, conflict resolution may eventually be the overarching term for a set of carefully defined professions, like mediation, restorative justice, international negotiation, peace-building, and so on.

Over time, that set of practices will probably continue to grow—and the term, "conflict resolution," might stick, or another term, like "conflict transformation" or "conflict processes," might come to be used. In any case, the term that is chosen will address the need for an overarching term. This need is likely to arise from the need to distinguish professional practices for the consumer public, the legal status of the profession, and the way that fees are collected—including the role of insurance companies and public agencies.

Some people, including me, believe that Western notions of professionalism, consumerism, individualism, and economic scarcity may be creating some of the underlying conflicts in the world. Consequently, we wonder how professionalization might, itself, be ill-equipped to address these underlying conflicts. In this scenario, there may emerge a new field of conflict resolution—with a new mandate—that does not fall victim to these Western professional notions and problems.

What range of conflict does Conflict Resolution address?

If our field was named "Conflict Studies," which I currently recommend, it would be clear that we address all conflicts, though that it a tall order! There is often a perception that Conflict Resolution is about specific skills for resolving conflict to be used in specific circumstances. For instance, we teach skills for negotiation, mediation, atonement/forgiveness, nonviolence, and peacemaking. These skills can be used in some circumstances in everyday life, and there are career tracks, where they can be used professionally.

However, we encounter conflicts in myriad ways in our lives, and we witness conflict throughout the news, and in our studies of history, as well as it being a factor in everything we study or talk about. How does Conflict Resolution address all of this? Obviously, it cannot span the full breadth of our lives. However, it can offer insights and techniques that can be applied to a wide variety of circumstances.

This textbook, and its related D2L course materials, focuses on the important values and ethics of conflict resolution. Implementing these values and ethics in our lives is **transformative** because we become positive conflict facilitators, who resist handling conflict destructively. Our heightened empathy and understanding for others also help us be a force for positivity, progress, and peace.

However, our empathy and understanding for others also presents us with vexing dilemmas, where the horns of the dilemma seem to make the conflict intractable.

In this book, I am suggesting that we can effectively navigate dilemmas, such as climate change and the specter of military dictatorship, by opening up the space for a variety of possible scenarios. The following are ideas on how to create conditions for change that do not depend on a military dictatorship:

Inspire youth with "I have a dream." Just as Martin Luther King Jr. inspired a generation to step up the campaign for equality and respect across racial lines, climate change advocates need to inspire a new generation for a sustainable world. This has already begun with lawsuits from young people asserting that climate change is denying their future.

Support the rights of Native American tribes are baked into the United States Constitution. Land reserved for tribes, and the ecosystems that are part of their land, are being violated by current inadequate climate change policies. This violates the Constitutional protections for tribes, and is therefore unconstitutional. Legal advocacy for tribes can force improvements to climate change policies.

Elect government representatives and leaders who have ideas for averting ecological collapse.

Advocate for schools and colleges to focus on sustainability and ecological health.

Challenge agribusiness to become fully organic.

Only buy or grow organic food.

Challenge polluters and all industries who contribute to greenhouse gases

Eliminate or minimize fossil-fuel-propelled vehicles from your daily life.

Encourage your friends and family to adopt more sustainable practices and join you in a broader advocacy.

Consider Half Earth. Edward O. Wilson argues, in his book, Half Earth, that it is conceivable to commit half of the Earth to wilderness as nature preserves. He states that most of the oceans are relatively healthy ecosystems, and that there are many large nature-preserves already in place. Building on the recommendations of his book, expanding our commitment to sustainability by building on past commitments will be easier than starting from scratch.

Brainstorm with others at every opportunity on how to broaden our efforts to save the Earth's ecosystems.

This **ongoing dialogue** with others is the key to navigating the space within the dilemma of averting ecological catastrophe without a global military dictatorship. This book/course is dedicated to exploring the dilemmas created by our differing values and ethics. In this exploration, I hope to stimulate dialogues within the dilemmas, and across the differences, with the goal of creating new possibilities to positively navigate our shared future more positively, productively, and peacefully.

Let's summarize how I suggest we productively engage the sustainability/violent dictatorship dilemma

How do we calm the emotional flooding that arises in heated disputes?

Inventory what is driving disputants into emotional flooding, and develop a strategy for calming down this flooding. Importantly, emotional flooding can lead to authoritarian and militaristic solutions.

What is the history of this difference or dilemma?

Climate change policies and reactions have a long and interesting history. Throughout most of the 1980's, there was widespread institutional and global agreement that runaway greenhouse gases needed to be controlled. "Nearly everything we understand about global warming was understood in 1979." (Rich, Nathaniel. *Losing Earth: A Resent History*, 2019, p. 3) "For the decade that ran between 1979 and 1989, we had an excellent change (of solving the problem of global warming)." (ibid, p. 5)

Knowing this history creates opportunities to reverse climate change denial and resistance, as well as avoiding authoritarian and violent solutions. We need to carefully document how emergency scenarios, like the 9/11 attack, turn into dictatorial military interventions, as in the Afghanistan/Iraq wars.

Therefore, climate change emergencies can easily turn into dictatorial military interventions that force changes that are likely to escalate violence. The intractability is that it may seem inevitable that averting climate disaster will take dictatorial military force that will likely involve violence.

Was it always seen as intractable?

No, see the book, *Losing Earth: A Resent History,* referenced above.

The goal of working with the dilemma needs to be clearly established.

The goal would be to have a nonviolent and democratic strategy that effectively incentivizes sustainability and averts climate disaster.

In theory, every seemingly intractable conflict has moving parts, therefore, the moving parts need to be inventoried.

Public opinion, supportive of strong climate change policies, is rapidly expanding. This is a crucial moving part of this seemingly intractable conflict.

A broad base of expertise needs to be created to hammer out strategies.

An alliance of policy-makers, scientists, climate change activists, media, and religious leaders need to work with pro-democracy and nonviolence practitioners to strategize about this particular aspect of our climate change crisis.

The widest possible dialogue, involving diverse political views, cultures, and traditions needs to occur, so that the strategies can find traction globally, if necessary.

The alliance of experts, listed above, needs to be expanded globally.

Where conflicts, differences, and dilemmas tend to be polarized to such a degree that there is little room to think in-between the polarities. One way to address this tendency towards polarization is to construct a continuum between extremes and map the actual positions, interests, differences, and dilemmas within the space created for navigation.

This analysis needs to occur around this particular aspect of our climate change crisis.

How can we transform heated conflict from a heated preoccupation with the past into planning for a more peaceful and just future?

Both climate change deniers, as well as those resistant to effective climate change policies, need to vent about the past mistakes by both sides, and more towards strategizing about future measures that both protect our environment and populations, while averting authoritarian and militaristic solutions.

Implementation of the strategies may need to be sufficiently funded and linked to powerful institutions.

It will take money, power, and status to implement the strategies, above. We must be realistic about our need for the support of the wealthy, powerful, and well-situated to maximize our effectiveness. In the case at hand, we must engage every strata of society in these strategies because all of our fates are linked.

Textbook in support of the online courses: Conflict Resolution Values and Ethics and

Advanced Conflict Resolution Values and Ethics

This textbook, **Navigating Seemingly Intractable Conflicts**, is intended to correspond with the online D2L site for Conflict Resolution Values and Ethics in and Advanced Conflict Resolution Values and Ethics in courses at Portland State University. However, it is also designed to fit other conflict processes courses, at other colleges and universities, at either the graduate or undergraduate level, and in the quarter term or semester format.

Part One of the first ten chapters is recommended for undergraduate courses in the quarter term format;

Part One of the full fifteen chapters is recommended for undergraduates in the semester format;

Parts One and Two of the first ten chapters are recommended for graduate courses in the quarter term format;

Parts One and Two of the full fifteen chapters are recommended for undergraduates in the semester format;

Questions and comments about this text can be directed to me at my email: gouldr@pdx.edu

Organization of this Book:

This book is intended to serve students in either a quarter term or semester system. For quarter term students, the first ten chapters would normally be assigned, and the second five chapters would be optional. For semester students, fourteen or fifteen chapters will be assigned, with any skipped chapters or sections serving as optional lessons. Depending on the ability and interest levels of students, the chapters or sections can be cherry-picked to form an appropriate course load, or combined with other resources. Later in this introduction, each chapter's topics will be briefly summarized.

Focus on Dilemmas:

In each of the chapters of this book, I focus on **important dilemmas** that are not easily navigated or resolved. Conflict workers need to avoid dogmatic perspectives or solutions to significant local and global issues. Likewise, I need to be mindful of my own dogmatisms! I will try to be transparent about them, and bring them into the text for your consideration.

There are many dilemmas that confront conflict facilitators. I will regularly point out the dilemmas in the field that need to be navigated by way of different perspectives, experiences, thinking, values,

ethics, beliefs, and ways of confirming all of these. I suggest that we can do a better job, as "reflective practitioners," by taking up these considerations.

Why should conflict facilitators think more deeply about their practice?

Many conflict resolvers are trained to hold and enforce **conflict process**. Conflict facilitators help disputants work through their differences. Often, the disputants are encouraged to find common ground amongst their contrasting or conflicting interests. Once this common ground is found, then a resolution or management strategy can be developed that helps them work productively together, whether in the workplace, neighborhood, interest group, or home. In all of this work, why is it necessary to examine, or worry about the deeper factors, dynamics, values, and ethics that drive the differences and disagreements involved in the conflict, and may affect its management?

On the one hand, the practice of never going beyond the customary limits of traditional conflict resolution processes is certainly reasonable because, within that structure, the conflict process facilitator can remain a dispassionate neutral functionary. On this view, a "neutral" will not intervene more deeply in the power dynamics or values of the disputants, fearing that if they do, they will be perceived as taking a side. Consequently, many conflict-process trainings focus on just those traditional techniques, with no need to go deeper.

On the other hand, I suggest that we can improve our ability to positively facilitate conflicts of many different types, if we more deeply investigate our processes to illuminate additional ways to bring positive results. In the following text, I examine these factors and dynamics that drive a deeper analysis, each of which form dilemmas that need to be productively navigated.

These include:

1. Conformity and Identity Differences (Paradoxical Identities)
2. Connection and Disconnection
3. Civility and Expressing a Full Range of Emotions
4. Different Types of Thinking and Unthinking
5. Economies of Abundance and Scarcity;
6. Class War and Multi-Class Collaboration
7. Interpersonal and Social Forgiveness and Atonement: Can Hope Build Trust?
8. Solid and Liquid Knowledge

9. Mystical Knowledge and Its Skeptics
10. Reconciling worldviews of Indigenous People and Civilized People
11. Individualism and Community
12. Violence and Nonviolence
13. Pacifism and War
14. Goodness and Evil
15. Differing Cultural Differences in Professional Ethics
16. Conflicting Global Ethics and Practices
17. Motivating and Enforcing Diverse Global Ethics
18. Positive Power and Abusive Power
19. Manipulative Games and Positive Bureaucratic Processes
20. Environmental Abundance and Scarcity
21. Cultural Differences in Environmental Negotiation Processes
22. Anarchism as Collaboration and Insurrection
23. Real and Virtual World Conflict
24. How We are Shaped by the Virtual World and Regaining our Humanity

How is this Book Different than Other Conflict Processes Textbooks?

Academic and professional conflict processes are like many academic disciplines that proceed in a cycle of researching CR practices, creating theories, and suggest new professional practices—then more research, revised theory creation, and renewed professional practice.

One of the tasks of philosophy is to investigate this research/theory/practice cycle, find aspects of it that might be problematic, and suggest new ways to address these difficulties. This textbook undertakes this philosophical investigation, though it is not meant to be exhaustive, as philosophy will ceaselessly continue to investigate all of the ways that people think about themselves and the world around them. As old problems are addressed, new problems will arise, that must be studied. Even old problems are rarely completely analyzed and disposed, as they often renew themselves, with further study, or when new eras of history take shape.

In this text, we will investigate how values and ethical assumptions are embedded in conflict processes,

and how certain conflict processes are embedded in philosophical thinking. I will be making the case that the theory and practice of conflict processes need philosophical depth. More briefly, I will suggest why philosophy needs insights and practices from conflict processes.

Why navigating difference and dilemma?

I have entitled this book, *Navigating Heated Differences and Dilemmas*, because I believe that the essence of conflict processes is to effectively navigate differences between people and the dilemmas that they face. If we do not have a difference, we do not have a conflict. If we do have a conflict, then it is of crucial importance how we approach and engage our differences, so that they lead to better understanding and stronger collaborations.

If our differences are handled badly, they can inflame our differences into a full-blown conflict, whether the battlefield is out in the open, or resides silently inside of us, undermining the potential for an authentic connection with each other. Everyone has differences. Even identical twins develop differences, as their histories diverge from an early age, giving each one a different perspective and experience.

I use the term, "navigation," as a metaphor for our ability to move across a wide variety of contexts, cultures, experiences, and abstractions. In a complex, global world, human beings need to be able to creatively move amongst all kinds of perspectives, viewpoints, insights, principles, and beliefs. What, at first, may seem to be contradictions, but they often contain important values to respect and understand. Getting stuck in our thinking, our behaviors, our positions, our procedures, and our ways of framing human nature, or our specific contexts, can undermine our ability to thrive in our current world. Even the academic and professional fields of conflict processes can get stuck in assumptions, theories, and practices, so my use of the term, "navigation," is meant to urge everyone interested in working with conflict and difference to get unstuck and navigate the differences that constantly confront us.

Who am I?

I'm Robert Gould, though I prefer to be called, "Rob," which makes me "Rob Gould," which is similar to "rob gold," which was the unfortunate impulse that fueled the western expansion of the former British colonies (Manifest Destiny), which become known as the United States of America. The western expansion of the U.S.A. occurred in earnest immediately after the Civil War, though it was opposed by many politicians and citizens, including Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant, who believed that any expansion should be inspired by democracy, not conquest. Nevertheless, western expansion into the land of Native Americans was a brutal war of conquest, called the "Indian Wars," which are probably more

appropriately known as the western Indian genocides, added to the eastern Indian genocides, and the southern Indian genocides. (The northern Indian genocides were conducted by Canadians.)

I am 0.2% Native American; the rest of my ancestors are European, most prominently British, Swedish, and Dutch. Bluntly, most of my ancestors were the enemy of indigenous people, even though some of them may have been refugees from hostile conditions in Europe. Doubtless, most of them believed in the stereotype of Indians as illiterate, primitive, savages; a false picture that easily led to campaigns of cultural genocide that have systematically continued to the present day.

I am committed to an ongoing atonement for the crimes of my ancestors, and the ongoing crime of living on what is rightfully Native American land. Specifically, my home has trees on it that were planted by members of the Clackamas tribe, 90% of whom died from an epidemic brought to the Willamette River by sick sailors. The 88 local survivors were forcefully removed to the Oregon Coast to become part of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. I work to promote awareness of Native American philosophy and traditions, as well as working to promote Native American treaty rights.

I have a Bachelor's Degree and a PhD. in Philosophy, as well as a Master's Degree in Teaching. I was born in Portland, Oregon, went to elementary school in, what is now, Shattuck Hall on the PSU Campus, and then graduated from Wilson High School in SW Portland. All of my education has been in Oregon, so I'm a genuine local, aside from being a colonist descendant!

I have been active in a variety of peace, conflict processes, and social justice issues for fifty years. From 1971-1978, I served as a paralegal counselor and director of the Portland Military and Veterans Counseling Center at the Koinonia House, PSU's former Campus Christian Ministry. During this time, I advised military personnel and veterans, many of whom suffered from PTSD, mostly securing legal resources for these individuals. From 1978-1987, I served as the Portland Office Coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee, a national Quaker pacifist organization, supporting an array of peace and social justice programs.

I first started teaching conflict processes and peace studies courses for the religious community and high schools during the 1970s. I co-founded the Oregon Peace Institute in 1984, served as the co-director of the Peace Studies Program at the University of Oregon, and as co-director of the Oregon Peace Studies Consortium in 1988-1989, cofounded the Conflict Processes Graduate Program at Portland State University in 1993, serving as its director until 2015, cofounded the Northwest Institute for Conflict Processes in 1999, and the Newhall Nonviolence Institute in 2002, and the Peace and Conflict Studies Consortium in 2005. I am currently the Treasurer of the Oregon Peace Institute.

My academic specialization is the philosophy of conflict processes, a sub-discipline that I founded. I publish in the areas of conflict processes, peace studies, hate studies, forgiveness and atonement studies,

nonviolence, and related philosophical issues. My interdisciplinary interests and competencies include: applied psychology, history, environmental studies, political science, English literature and writing, indigenous studies, and religious studies.

The Role of Philosophy in Conflict Processes

Philosophy seems extremely abstract; how can it be personal?

Impersonal Philosophy

At least since Aristotle, philosophers in the Western tradition have thought of philosophy as following from his definition of humans as "rational animals." If rationality is the key to human "success," then it makes sense that philosophers would aspire to be the most rational humans. Therefore, their work seems to follow Russell's description, below:

> The free intellect will see as God might see, without a *here* and *now*, without hopes and fears, without the trammels of customary beliefs and traditional prejudices, calmly, dispassionately, in the sole and exclusive desire of knowledge—knowledge as impersonal, as purely contemplative, as it is possible for man to attain. Hence, also, the free intellect will value more the abstract and universal knowledge, into which the accidents of private history do not enter, than the knowledge brought by the senses, and dependent, as such knowledge must be, upon an exclusive and personal point of view and a body whose sense-organs distort as much as they reveal. (Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*)

Personal Philosophy

However, Nietzsche challenged this picture of philosophical work by saying: "Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir. (my emphasis)(Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*)

Brison, writing in her book about her recovery from a brutal rape, found a great deal of philosophical significance in her tragic story. She stresses the following:

> "As we find that the 'accidents of private history,' especially those connected with gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and class, are not only worth thinking about, but are also inevitably, even if invisibly, present in much of philosophy, we are beginning to write in the first person, not out of sloppy self-indulgence, but out of intellectual necessity." (p. 25, Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self*)

Thinking within the tension of abstraction and particularity:

I suggest that, as conflict resolvers, we need to work within the tension of abstraction and particularity—the transpersonal and the personal. We need to generalize and theorize to describe what all humans (or most humans) share, but then those generalizations and theories are constantly challenged by examples of individual difference, cultural behavior, belief, and norms. In this dialectic process, we are constantly refining our view of human commonality and diversity.

Personal Story:

In this book, we will be exploring some themes of commonality and diversity. We will need to have some examples to work with. Sometimes those examples can be quite personal. For example, one day during the spring break of 2008, I squirmed in a dental chair, while an emergency dentist struggled to pull a molar that she, in consultation with another dentist, determined could not be saved. At various points over a half hour or so, she would pull until I raised my hand in pain; she would then inject more anesthetic and try to pull again, repeating the cycle, over and over, until she felt that she had reached the maximum amount of anesthetic that could be used. Then, she covered over what was left of the tooth with a cap of a temporary substance, and sent me home to wait a couple of days before another dentist was scheduled to try to pull the tooth again.

Traumatized, my spring break cursed, I went home to explain the seemingly unforgivable crisis to my wife. Angry that our vacation was cancelled and that I had persisted in going to a dental group that she had suspected of malpractice for the last fifteen years, she proceeded to vent for what seemed like hours. Finally, reduced to tears, I got a bit of sympathy–to her, a very “unattractive” need of mine.

Stop right here. Aren’t I getting a bit too personal? Philosophical discussions are generally thought of as public discourse; and the personal can get way too private—too much information! Who wants to hear about one’s teacher crying, any more than one’s physician or one’s dentist crying? It’s like hearing about your parent’s sex life. Don’t we want to think of these people in limited professional or parental roles–reasonable and rather dispassionate? Isn’t this a generalization that many of us have? But does this constructed image allow professionals and parents to be fully human?

Personal as philosophical like the feminist personal as political:

The notion of the personal as philosophical is derived from the feminist view of the personal as political. The insight of the latter is that a woman’s personal experience should have political power, and not be limited to a kind of privacy that is silencing. Issues, like sexism, domestic violence, risks

of illegal abortions, women's sexual needs and identities, should be brought out of the closet and into public discussion and consciousness-raising. However, is such an airing of private matters always appropriate—or always appropriately done?

Protecting Privacy and Intimacy from Public View:

The film, *Kinsey*, about the sex researcher of the mid-twentieth century, shows sexuality and confessional sex talk in ways that can easily make the viewer squirm. We are seeing and hearing about private experiences because they are a component of the research. Is that appropriate? Could this movie have been made differently? What is the best way to handle personal information for either political or philosophical ends?

Indigenous Protection of the Sacred and Private:

Native Americans often keep their rituals, practices, and sacred sites private. Only tribal members are allowed to know about these things, and only when they are mature enough to maintain the secrecy. For Native Americans, some things are not open to the scrutiny of non-tribal members and Western Science. When a Native American skeleton is unearthed, scientists want to study the bones, whereas Native Americans feel a strong need to rebury the bones, as soon as possible, because those bones belong to the ongoing person' spirit, the tribe, and the earth—all different layers of privacy.

Stories as Knowledge:

Just as indigenous people transmitted timeless wisdom through stories, I will tell stories in this book, and the related course, to help communicate wisdom. These stories are about personal positive and negative conflict processes, focusing on how they affect philosophical notions at the core of conflict facilitation. What will you think of these stories? Are they too personal? We may be telling each other personal stories and how they have transformed our philosophical understanding. I may suggest that you share personal stories with me and with each other. As a professional, I will keep your stories confidential; but if you share stories with classmates, your privacy will depend on your level of trust in whom you tell. Like scientists, we have lofty goals concerning the broader purposes of intellectual growth and development. However, there is a risk to most things. Are we fully aware of the risks involved with personal stories?

What does philosophy have to do with conflict processes?

First of all, I find it important to investigate the terms, concepts, and practices of conflict resolution to identify worries and problems that may exist in what is taken for granted by academics and practitioners. This investigation is philosophical because it reaches into the axiology (values in CR), epistemology (how we know what we do in CR), and metaphysics (what exists in CR practices).

Second, I am a trained philosopher, who has taught and practiced conflict processes since the mid-1970s. So this text emerges from both of my two degrees in philosophy (and one in teaching), as well as my experience resolving conflict, using insights from philosophy. Philosophy, at its best, explores extremely different ways of thinking, at times contradictory, and at times, paradoxical. At its worst, philosophy is dogmatic and argumentative, where validating opposing views seems virtually impossible. Therefore, the study and application of philosophical insights and practices has been enormously useful for me as a conflict processes teacher, and as a conflict processes practitioner, while some of its insights and practices have also undermined the teaching and practice of conflict processes.

There is validation for philosophy as a positive resource for conflict processes in the post-Wittgensteinian, dialectical, and post-modern traditions, especially in those traditions' support for difference, as central to philosophical inquiry. The work of James Crosswhite, Josina M. Makau and Debian L. Marty also provide important insights that also inform how philosophy can move from adversariality to collaboration.

Ironically, I have attended a series of meetings of the American Philosophical Association section, Concerned Philosophers for Peace, where only a scant few of those philosophers seeming had any interest in how conflict processes had anything to do with peace. Rather, their rather narrow project seemed to focus on the merits of pacifism, and arguments against war. Therefore, I must admit that I may be the only philosopher doing this kind of investigation. I hope I'm wrong about this!

Below are several ways that philosophy and conflict processes contribute to each other. I will briefly introduce some of these ways, here, and further elaborate on them in the full text:

(1) Why the theory and practice of conflict processes needs philosophical depth: Conflict processes or any collaborative process need philosophical depth because conflicts can be understood in so many diverse ways, encompassing the three philosophical areas, ethics (how we find value), epistemology (how we find knowledge), and metaphysics (how we find what is real). Collaborative processes give us the advantage of multiple perspectives, cultural differences, diverse experiences, and the many ways that a conflict can be framed and understood. The conflict, itself, can illuminate differences that would otherwise be hidden from consideration. Therefore, reflective philosophical techniques can be

advantageous, especially when disputants have dramatically different cultural and experiential frames of reference.

(2) Why conflict processes needs reflective methods: The traditional, dominant view in Western philosophy is that there is only on kind of thinking, namely rational thinking, where people are logical, and proceed from premises or assumptions to valid conclusions. If they are not logical, in this way, they are being illogical, irrational, speculative, creative, or mimicking conventional thoughts, without regard to the formal structure of true thinking. Computers generally use logical patterns, where functions follow each other in a linear sequence to help us reach conclusions from sometimes complex data points. Analyzing context and multi-causal events pose a problem for both logic and computer manipulation because they cannot be reduced to simple factors or linear progressions.

However, informal logic emerged to analyze and criticize the way people ordinarily think. Informal logic focuses on how people persuade or address audiences, and how their thoughts and conversations can be saturated with fallacies. Informal logic purports to help us evaluate thinking, with the goal of understanding the dynamics that take place, and to set standards, by which we might argue truthfully or deceptively. Critical thinking is the way that people learn to use informal logic to help them think for themselves, without letting others do their thinking for them.

The strength of critical thinking is that it helps us think for ourselves, and resist herd or mob thinking. If you are often persuaded to think like your peers or your identity group, you are letting the group do your thinking. However, if you only think for yourself, you might find yourself thinking alone, and not testing your thoughts out with other people, who can give you a reality check.

Ted Kaczynski, otherwise known as the “Unibomber” is an exceedingly bright man, whose manifesto has some insightful reflections, expressing the power of his ability to think for himself, alone. However, he did not test his thoughts with others, and concluded that the best way to start a revolution against some to the evils in society was to kill certain individuals in the computer technology field. Three people died and twenty-three others were injured. Without having conversations with other people, who also think for themselves, one runs the risk of being a one-person-mob. Mr. Kaczynski was a mob-of-one, and will likely spend the rest of his life in prison for the simple reason that, despite his brilliance, he trusted no one to give him a reality check.

The “connected knowing” of Blythe McVicker Clinchy and the “meditative thinking” of Martin Heidegger give us grounds for “engaged thinking,” where critical thinkers think together, rather than alone. First, critical thinkers need to escape the herd mentality of groupthink, and then, second, they need to engage each other to help ground themselves in the broader context of experience, knowledge, and the practicalities of applying thoughts to the real world, strategically.

As you can see, the list of ways of thinking is increasing. So far, we have logical thinking, critical thinking, engaged thinking, meditative thinking, contextual thinking, and strategic thinking. Doubtless, there are more kinds of thought, including mystical thought and the practice of not-thinking in meditative practices that leads us to other kinds of realizations and contentment. I suggest that we consider these different kinds of thinking to be "reflective methods," where utilizing different reflective methods help us think, not just from different perspectives, but by using different methods.

(3) Navigating groupthink and critical thinking to reach engaged thinking: Within the practice of informal logic, we learn to adopt critical thinking techniques to overcome the conformity-enforcement of groupthink. Critical thinking helps us think for ourselves, not letting the group do our thinking for us. Of course, this is easier said than done! We are always vulnerable to groupthink because so many of our cultural traditions are embedded in the way our thoughts are framed and in the forms of our thinking, including the meaning of our words and other expressions. All of us live within at least one cultural tradition, which forms elements of groupthink, and many of us live in two or more cultural traditions, where navigating differing groupthinks give us an opportunity to see a cultural tradition from outside of it. I use the term, "engaged thinking," to refer to the process of trying to think for oneself, while engaging in conversations with people, both inside and outside of our most dominant cultural tradition. This process of engaged thinking can only productively occur when one is regularly discussing a variety of topics within a community that is as diverse as possible and practicable.

(4) Western notions of rationality tend to focus on a monological, straight line manipulation of abstractions, without much regard for multi-causal and multi-reason analysis: In most of the civilized world, rationality is defined in terms of generalizations and abstractions, ordered in a reasoned or logical progression. Often, our rationality is supposed to work through different alternatives to find a specific reason that something happened, or is likely to happen, or a specific cause that explains an effect. This monological thought process tends to dismiss an alternative multi-causal or multi-reason analysis because the later analyses are messy, inelegant, or imprecise.

However, it can be noted that many, if not most phenomena have many causes and/or many reasons for occurring. This observation complicates the work of rationality, which is supposed to give us an authoritative view of the truth of the matter at hand in a straight-line logical scheme. As an example, a disease often has many causes and conditions that need to be present. As another example, many of our decisions have multiple reasons, not just one. In some cases, it is almost an infinite task to create causal or reason matrices that comprehensively help us understand the underlying factors that cause, or help us understand, a disease or a decision. Furthermore, any abstract analysis, using generalizations, ignores the non-reducible idiosyncrasies of the specific context of any phenomena, as explained below.

(5) Navigating Both Map and Territory: We, in the civilized world, live by maps and mapping devices to navigate our world, or to understand it. Unfortunately (of fortunately—depending on your view), the

territory is not the map, and the territory resists accurate mapping, as reducing the territory, in its infinite diversity, always creates a map that is good for locating what the map-maker assumes we want to find, and ignores other details that the map-maker does not suppose we are interested in knowing.

Therefore, to be good navigators, we need to be mindful of both the map and the territory. The map helps us notice what mapmakers think is important, and when we get to know the territory, we will remember aspects of the land that are important to us, and that will help us navigate when the map does not give us those details. Interestingly, when I talk to forest rangers, they readily admit that even fresh maps have inaccuracies: "That road is gone. That trail in impassible. That creek changed its path last winter." Forest rangers routinely go out in the field to check on the accuracy of a map, then report the discrepancies to the mapmaker.

(6) Navigating difference by focusing on background stories as the real territory: When native peoples pass down stories to succeeding generations, as their oral or narrative history, scientists discover that they often match the scientific data. In the case of the last subduction earthquake in the Northwest, scientists say that the geological record points to about 1700. This date matches many oral histories of Northwest tribes. The advantage of storytelling is that it carries us into the past with our full human dimensions, its emotions, its power, its effect on us as people. Science just gives us numbers and abstractions. The experience of human difference is always unique, emotional, and to a certain extent, mysterious. A computer will never be a competent conflict resolver because it can never grasp the context of the dispute, nor feel the emotions and drama in the room. Even humans, trying to resolve conflicts online or on the phone, are severely hampered in our ability to know the context and feel the emotions and drama. So, computers will be that much worse!

(7) Navigating difference by focusing on abstractions as mapping devices: Mapmakers generally agree about the meaning of mapping devices. The terms for topographical maps are fairly uniform. However, we are not nearly so precise in our use of abstractions and generalizations. Take the term, "truth." In logic, the truth of a logical proposition can be calculated, given the rules of logic. However, if someone wants to tell me their "truth," they are doing something altogether different. That person is saying that they want to convey something deeply important about themselves. They are not claiming that what they will say will be logically true or that it is true for other people, it's just true for them.

A truth about me is that I think I am smart and stupid at the same time, often about the same thing. However, if you were to give me an IQ test, I guess I would test as slightly better than the average, just like the kids of Garrison Keillor's Lake Woebegone are all above average. But that is not my experience of myself. Sometimes, I think I can be pretty smart, and pretty creative, but on further examination, I just didn't realize how little I knew, or how my creativity was so pedestrian. Nevertheless, "my truth is just MY experience of myself—what is TRUE for me. Other generalizations and abstractions have similar problems of precision. They just mean different things in different contexts. The great

philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, tried to create a precise philosophical language, in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosphicus*, and gave up, moving toward a context-dependent understanding of philosophical language in his *Philosophical Investigations*. I'm with him on this topic.

(8) Difference and Context vs. Homogeneity and Universality: In the discussion that we have been having, we are confronted with two radically different, fundamental worldviews. The traditional Western Civilization view is that ultimate truth resides in finding categories that reduce difference into sameness. We define individual things in terms of their categorical description. Each rock, that we pick up, is a member of the category, "rock," because they all have the same description. Post-Wittgensteinian, continental and non-Western philosophers , including indigenous philosophers suggest that any reductionist strategy is questionable because it tends to blur differences into uniformity. For them, each rock is unique and a blend of substances. Any effort to reduce rocks to just one category is misleading. These latter philosophers suggest that the uniqueness and context of something can never be reduced to abstractions, any more than natural scenery can be reduced to photographs.

Navigating these two worldviews means that there is some truth to each one. And therefore, we need to navigate between them. Some things can be helpfully organized into a category. Other things are unhelpfully grouped into a category. I make a food list because I think that all of the items are available at the nearby grocery store. However, when I go to the grocery store, not all of the items on the list are available at THIS grocery store, so I need to go to a second grocery store to complete my shopping. Sometimes there is difference lurking in the homogeneity, and sometimes there is homogeneity lurking in seeming difference. My view can be reductionist or non-reductionist, depending on the context.

What does this mean for conflict resolvers? It means that we should never feel that we have figured out a conflict or a way to process it; it will always be somewhat of a mystery, where we need a steady stream of information and engaged collaboration by all of the disputants involved. Sometimes it will be helpful to simplify the dynamics of the conflict, and sometimes that move will be too reductionist, and we will need to reengage the complexities involved.

(9) Feminist, indigenous, Buddhist, and Taoist philosophical insights in conflict processes: In my opinion, feminist, indigenous, Buddhist, and Taoist philosophical insights are quite valuable for the theories and practices of conflict processes. Feminism contributes views on connected knowing, overcoming gender oppression and discrimination, and full inclusiveness of all participants to conflict. Indigenous insights include challenges to Western notions of separation of nature from humanity, challenges to overriding self-interest, and challenges to Western notions of time and space the separate people from the past and future, as well as local and global spaces. Buddhist insights contribute notions of nonattachment, which can release us from our addictions to desires, status, power, wealth, and influence. Buddhism also challenges our fundamental separation from one another, and urges us to be mindful about everything we do. Taoism helps us stay on our path forward in our intuitive knowledge

of its direction, and our trust that unanticipated turns in the path are just the way the path is guiding us along. Of course, other philosophical traditions have insights to offer this work; however my reach is always way farther than my grasp; so this work will need to be revised and updated regularly!

(10) Western philosophical biases in conflict processes: Because the theories and practices of conflict processes in Western mainstream culture have been framed within Western mainstream philosophical assumptions and presuppositions, it is not surprising that conflict processes has deep biases away from, and sometimes contradictory to, non-mainstream cultures. This book challenges those biases, and suggests ways to bring conflict processes theories and practices more in line with a broader spectrum of philosophical insights and cultural practices. Bias is always inherent in our fundamental subjectivity, but when we recognize them, we can become a bit less biased. Progress; not perfection.

(11) What conflict processes can mean for philosophy: Of course, this subject would, doubtless, take several thousand words to begin to answer adequately. So, I'll write just a few sentences to address it, inadequately, here. Philosophy, in the traditions of Western Civilization, is generally concerned with abstractions like truth, justice, the nature of knowledge, ethical principles, and what is real and unreal, etc., with scant concern for context or narrative analysis.

Alternatively, using the metaphor of navigation, we are not committed to winning an argument between different analyses or perspectives. Rather, we can suggest processes to more productively navigate these topics, in terms of context, as well as narrative techniques and histories. My point is not to demonize the traditions of Western philosophy, as in some cases, they may be the most appropriate. Rather, in suggesting an alternative to those processes, I am suggesting that we can navigate between the two of them, creating more choices for how to proceed in addressing philosophical problems and the practical dilemmas that arise from them.

Elephants and Dilemmas in Conflict Processes

Ten Elephants in the Room

(1) **Power can play a part in every conflict:** Just as a big wave can pound a surfer into the sand, power in a conflict can be used to pressure one disputant to give in to the will of the more powerful disputant. As I was writing this book, I talked with an experienced body surfer about being slammed into the sand when he got caught in an oversized wave close to shore the week before. He broke several ribs and had a slightly punctured lung.

In conflicts, we move along a continuum of power: at one end is perfectly shared, symmetrical, power; on the other end is perfectly dominating, asymmetrical, power. In any conflict, the dispute may move along this continuum, as the power shifts to being shared, on one end, to concentrating more, at the other end, in one disputant. The following factors are examples of ways that power can slam us by a big wave.

- One disputant has more status, wealth, or influence.
- One disputant may have a stronger and assertive personality.
- One disputant can use emotional intensity to dominate.
- One disputant has more unearned privilege.
- One disputant tells a more compelling story.
- One disputant is more comfortable in conflict.
- One disputant is more comfortable in the environment of the conflict process.
- One disputant can be more manipulative.
- One disputant is a talented game-player, and can be, easily and skillfully, dishonest.

This list can go on and on, depending on the various power differences between disputants. A mediator/facilitator can either help disputants share power, or contribute to the power difference, perhaps unknowingly because of their own power status. I have spent most of my life in the activist, peacenik, beatnik, sailor/surfer, hippie, scholar culture. My wife has been on the borderline of these cultures, but has lived mostly in the wealthier suburban cultures. We live together in a wealthier suburb of Portland, so she has more of the conformity power over me because she knows those values better than I do. On the

other hand, my activist/scholarly life informs a lot of our shared life, so I have power in those contexts. Given that my wife is a former teacher/current psychotherapist and I am a conflict processes educator, we are mindful of the power dynamics between us.

However, as we navigate the terrain of our conflicts, we do not always pay close enough attention to this resident elephant. When power shifts, toward one of us, in a disagreement, the other one often gets angry and frustrated. We have a conflict rule that when one of us gets upset, the other person validates the anger and says, "What can I do to help?" This is a great strategy; we should use it more…

(2) **Every difference has the potential to trigger cognitive dissonance**: Encountering unexpected, unwanted, or disturbing differences, in either our social experiences or internal thoughts, can easily lead to uncomfortable cognitive dissonance. When these differences disrupt our customary way of thinking and perceiving the world, we find ourselves having to manage this dissonance.

Often, we handle dissonance badly, as we tend to judge the stimulus that created the dissonance as wrong—adding an unwanted bit of chaos and disharmony in our lives. Our culture generally handles cognitive dissonance so badly that it has become a form of mass insanity. It causes virtually all of us to blame something, someone, or some group, for the dissonance that we are experiencing. It takes great patience and care to overcome our tendency to judge, and to listen with a compassionate heart to understand the difference and try to build a bridge to it. A key insight about judging too quickly is that we can easily get stuck in our own mindset, our cultural history, our emotional experience, and/or our peer group perspective. This dynamic creates social divisions that are almost impossible to bridge. And now social media is emphasizing the echo chambers that have now defined us, and are a chief symptom of our mass insanity.

In some cases of cognitive dissonance, we must defend ourselves and our point of view, if we are truly made vulnerable by the difference or conflict. If the dissonance is being caused by disrespectful or oppressive treatment, harassment, exploitation, or demonization, we have a responsibility to fight of the internalization of that treatment, which can manifest itself in a destructive kind of cognitive dissonance.

Navigating cognitive dissonance is challenging. I try to train myself to constantly expect change—from the expected to the unexpected—suddenly. There is no formulaic way of addressing cognitive dissonance, as sometimes we need to sit with it to understand and process it. Other times, we need to defend ourselves and our personal psychology, as the dissonance has made us unreasonably vulnerable.

In the face of cognitive dissonance, we need to unlearn the impulse to demonize what is causing the dissonance, or ignoring it. Rather, we need to validate the cause of the dissonance, so that we can navigate between the two views, which appear to be in conflict. In many cases, there is some truth or reality in each side of the dissonance, so we need to find a way of validating what seems to make

some sense on both sides. This validation does not mean that we choose to "sit on the fence" and avoid engaging the dissonance at all.

My dear, departed, mother led her life either sitting on such fences, or taking the position that aligned with the groupthink of her peers. We all probably do this to some degree. The challenge for conflict workers is to notice the dissonance, seek to understand each side better, and find ways to validate at least some of each side. After that, we can navigate the territory of the dissonance, using the diverging views from judgment and compassion. I am suggesting that, in validating aspects of each side, and using the judgment and compassion views, we create something like, north-south and east-west grids, as navigational aids.

In mainstream Euro-American culture, we have a bias towards being decisive, which exacerbates the effect of cognitive dissonance because we feel pressured to decide-one-way-or-the-other quickly. We pathologize indecision. I think that it's important to develop a capacity to be comfortable with indecision. In many ways, being indecisive is the role of the mediator/fascinator of collaborative processes. Indecisive and endlessly curious for more information, more perspective, more stories, more depth. I practice indecision, as a genuine option, whenever I am faced with decisions, trivial and significant. I start with the trivial and work my way up to the more significant. Embracing indecision gives me more time to process a choice, and eases the anxiety of being defectively indecisive. However, being endlessly indecisive is getting stuck in inaction. Inaction being the result of too much "sitting on the fence."

Therefore, conflict workers can go wrong by making premature decisions or prolonged indecisiveness.

(3) **The lack of committed, lifelong, diverse communities:** Bluntly speaking, traditional indigenous nations, who are not dominated by non-indigenous nations, have these kinds of diverse, super-dependable communities, as their tribes and bands. Their survival depends on these tribal bonds, so the welfare of everyone in the group is the priority of everyone else. Furthermore, such groups create emotionally and morally healthy members, who are typically compassionate and generous. Additionally, their natural diverse identities, interests, capacities, and personalities are affirmed, only being restricted if they undermine the welfare of the tribe.

The rest of us, non-tribal people, have generally lost such communities because we live in a civilization that keeps so many people moving from neighborhood to neighborhood—job to job—where neighbors and coworkers are generally transient and one's sense of community is restricted to family, work, social or political identity groups. In some cases, the identity group has more defining power than even the family. When this happens, family connections can weaken and, in some cases, virtually disappear over time. Identity group bonds may be powerful, but they are not what I would call "diverse." Rather,

identity groups are usually rather dogmatic about appearance and/or beliefs. In this sense, these identity groups do not allow the kind of individualism, where people can discover and fully express themselves.

Usually, the discovery process leads us to another identity group, and the loss of the previous identity group. Where there may be diversity of race or orientation, there is little diversity of thinking or conforming to group standards. Members need to carry the same flag, whether in dress, accent, coded speech, politics, or religion. Identity membership is often enforced passive-aggressively, with non-conformers subtly shunned. Identity group members, in good standing, talk about each other in more positive terms, and talk about those outside of their identity group in more negative terms. This insecurity of group memberships creates anxiety and conformity. Not having a diverse, supportive community, leads to insecurity. Not having traditional security can lead to addictive, unproductive, and even self-destructive behavior.

For intact indigenous people, families are positively enmeshed in bands and tribes. Individual members are defined in relation to these families, bands, and tribes. However, their identity is more a sense of a common historical bond, rather than a strict, overarching dogma about appearance and/or beliefs. Indigenous people tend to allow a wide range of free expression and behavior, within certain limits. In this sense, they allow for more individualism and identity discovery.

The lack of healthy communities in mainstream, Euro-American, culture creates a multitude of problems. Navigating a culture without traditional community bonds is difficult and stressful. Personally, I don't bond with an identity group of this kind, because I find them too restrictive. Rather, I just have a diverse group of friends, many of whom don't know each other, so I have the diversity, but not a cohesive community.

(4) **Civilization invented the notion that people are essentially self-interested and consumerist:** Again, indigenous people, in isolation of the effects of being culturally dominated by civilized people, are not obsessed with self-interest, nor are they materialistic consumers. Civilization became a global force through colonialism, where food and resources were converted into wealth and poverty. This process was driven by the psychological economy of the supposed need for an over-abundance of possessions and property for some, and marginalized survival for others.

Wealthy people certainly have an interest and capacity to consume massive quantities of material goods, but this materialist, self-interested "individualism" acts just like other addictions, where wealth becomes the answer to many of life's problems. Instead of taking action to solve their problems, they often take refuge in their wealth. Few people who are stuck in the colonized world economy, as either the addicted wealthy or the marginalized poor, seem to recognize that the loss of an authentic tribe is at that root of the despair of both extremes of wealth. In addition to the despair that it generates, our build-and-consume economy is not sustainable environmentally, while also forcing other species to adapt to us, rather us

all adapting to nature, as we all did not that long ago, given that the vast eons of human history were dedicated to sustainable living economies.

Navigating this dilemma is perhaps our greatest challenge, where, on the one hand, ecological studies point us toward a shift toward more nature-harmonious lifestyles, while the global marketplace drives us toward the climax of our current extinction pattern, where our own survival, along with countless other species, appears deeply threatened. Sadly, large corporations are marketing themselves as environmental advocates, while they actually only make minor alleviations of their toxicities.

(5) **Violence and the threat of violence dominate the planet**: This violence is physical, structural, and psychological. It is as part of the domination of the wealthy over the poor, the domination of the powerful over the powerless, as well as intimidating any popular uprising for peace, social justice, a fair economy, a sustainable environment, and broad democratic, collaborative, citizen participation in governance.

Navigating this issue is dispiriting because to pro-weapon lobbies are so powerful. The National Rifle Association blocks gun control. The military-industrial complex lobbies for more weapons. The USA stations vast military forces in every region of the globe and nearly every country in the world. Our country has mounted almost countless attacks on governments and peoples around the world that try to gain more control of their resources and the wealth generated from them. Simply, violence, or the threat of violence, is used to maintain the colonial structure of the world, where once European and American forces directly governed foreign nations, now the large corporate interests control the economies of most all of the world's countries, while ensuring that each country's government remains "friendly" to the wealthy, along with their needs for more wealth and power.

(6) **Physical, emotional, and identity survival:** Sadly, the notion of survival has morphed from simply meeting the basic needs for life to include the additionally powerful needs for psychological normalcy through identity group membership. In other words, without stable neighborhoods, populated with committed diverse people of all ages, who are committed to each other and the neighborhood for lifetimes (as indigenous people live), we turn to identity group membership that enforces strict conformity. Without this identity group validation, we don't feel normal, included, or valuable as a human being. Without this identity group validation, we are not surviving. Only with identity group validation, can we thrive.

To further complicate this problem, the increasing wealth divide in the U.S.A is pushing the limits of pure physical survival, as the epidemic of homelessness obviously dramatizes.

(7) **Dishonesty:** Given the way that survival has gotten harder to achieve, as explained above, we might wonder about the value of being honest, if honesty makes us vulnerable. Dishonesty, like theft, can make survival a bit easier, so why be honest and why not steal? Are we surprised that homeless people can

be con-artists and petty thieves? Are we surprised that commercial marketing can be dishonest, and that wealthy politicians and celebrities can blatantly lie and dip their hands into the till, to the tune of millions of dollars? On social media, people try to look their best, have great holidays, and succeed in every aspect of their lives. Varying degrees of con-artistry is a survival skill for virtually everyone in a society that has abandoned traditional, diverse communities.

(8) **Narratives of supremacy/justified privilege**: Another aspect of identity survival is found in the stated or unstated claims that white people have earned their supremacy, and have gained their privileges in a fair and justified way. This claim to supremacy takes two forms. One that is open, illustrated by avowed white supremacists, and one that is hidden, or unconscious, as demonstrated by white people who deny historical or current supremacy, and justify their privileges by their having earned them.

Without questions, white supremacists openly believe that white people deserve their supremacy because white, British colonists fought and won wars against England, and either defeated other European countries, or bought territory from them, to gain their broad foothold in North America. Key to these victories, the colonists also won wars against Natives, and benefited from the illnesses that the colonists broad here, and from which Natives had little, or no, immunity. Additionally, the vast numbers of conquered, surviving Natives were forced to relinquish their culture, dress, and language, along with many rights over treaty- protected Native land. Arguably, these measures constitute both physical and cultural genocide. Supporters of these practices may argue that our colonists out-competed the Natives and foreign colonists eager to claim our territory as their own.

I know an immigrant, a student of conflict processes, from the South Sudan, who said that he understood why whites can legitimately claim their superiority and privileges. He explained that his people had also claimed their supremacy over their country because they also earned it by warfare and domination, even though his tribe, the Dinka, is only 18% of the population. Before they were overthrown by the resident Muslims, the Dinka believed that their Black race was superior to the non-black Muslims.

People rationalized that they deserve what they earned; or when they inherited wealth, they deserve that wealth because they have strategically managed it, so that it grew for the benefit of a widening set of family members, and the recipients of their charitable giving. This view turns on the acceptance of individualism, which asserts that free people compete against each other as individuals, and the winners should be rewarded for winning—losers should be punished for losing. The winners gain in status and notoriety, and the losers endure a loss of status and become part of the nameless masses.

This is clearly neo-Darwinian thinking-in-action. In this picture of dog-eat-dog culture, there is no obligation to publicly share what the wealthy have earned, so any generosity should be in the interest of the giver, as there is a tax deduction to be gained. In our recent tax-cut, charitable-giving will most certainly be reduced, as there are new, lower, limits on charitable tax deductions. Nonprofit organizations

are scrambling to create new revenue streams, and the wealthy will generally not be supporting them, as they did, because they have no financial benefit.

Additionally, the wealthy generally favor tax cuts because they do not have control how government spends tax revenue. The wealthy generally believe that government bureaucracies waste money because of bureaucratic bloat. On this world view, the poor generally bring their poverty onto themselves because of their poor choices and a lack of incentive to learn how to succeed. On the other hand, the wealthy are that way because they have made better choices and have the incentive to succeed. For the defenders of the wealth divide, sorting out the successful individuals from the unsuccessful individuals is just how the Neo-Darwinian world works. To deny this is to deny reality.

Another way that people try to dominate, and justify their presumed privileges, is to play the victim card. This move is controversial because claiming to be victimized and oppressed is not necessarily playing the victim card. Some people have been victimized and oppressed, not just once, but in a long, seemingly endless repetition—themselves, their families, sometimes generations back into history, forming a long line of transgenerational transmission of trauma. This long series of abuses is not what it means to "play the victim card."

People who dwell upon or exaggerate their victimhood or oppression are playing the victim card. But who can judge whether someone is "dwelling upon," or "exaggerating" their victimhood or oppression? Someone who is judging another as playing the victim card is judging another person's experience. I suggest that people's experience should simply be validated from the view of compassion. It is only when playing the victim card is used to dominate or justify privileges that we might wonder about the legitimacy of this move.

In the #MeToo movement, people are calling out harassers and abusers for the harm they have done. Consequently, many of those called out have lost their employment and had their future opportunities narrowed radically. Is this a case of victims gaining dominance and justifying their privileges by using the victim card? I do not think this is the case. Victims who join the #MeToo movement are trying to get the broader society to be less tolerant of this kind of victimization. Therefore, this movement is trying to level the playing field, not turn the playing field to their advantage.

Given that I believe analysis this analysis to be generally true, there is always the possibility that some people falsely accuse individuals for sexual harassment and/or abuse because of a personal vendetta against that person. In those few cases, the false accusers are playing the victim card and triggering a mob reaction for either revenge, or perhaps, some personal advantage.

It is always possible that someone might choose to play the victim card by exaggerating their

victimization to gain an advantage in trying to win an argument, and put another disputant at a disadvantage.

In a culture where individuals compete (sometimes ruthlessly) to demonstrate that they are "better than" others, it is not surprising how many tactics people will use to show that they are, indeed, better than others. We do not necessarily need to say the phrases, that follow, they can just be evident in our nonverbal attitudes.

- I have a better education.
- I have a more powerful, sophisticated, successful, wealthy family.
- I went to more prestigious school.
- I live a better neighborhood.
- I have more valuable possessions.
- I am more attractive.
- I drive a better car.
- I go on better vacations.
- I know more languages.
- I go to more sophisticated and expensive cultural events.
- I know more famous people.
- I am more famous.
- I am cooler, more humorous, more interesting, more cultured.

With all of these potential claims of superiority, there are few ways to argue for equality. People, who thrive on making these sorts of claims, are not going to be easily convinced that they are equal to the people who populate the "masses." In the presence of someone who is defending their claims to superiority and privilege, the question, "Is anyone really better that another person?" will get a reaction of stunned silence or a condescending gesture of outrage.

Those who make claims to superiority and privilege also tend to divide the world into opposing categories, where they describe themselves in complementary ways, as in the left member of the couplets below:

- Smart/dumb

- Winners/losers
- Successful/lazy
- Sane/insane
- Legitimate/criminal
- Known/unknown
- Popular/unpopular
- Normal/abnormal
- Normal/weird
- Attractive/ugly
- Careful/careless
- Responsible/irresponsible
- Sensitive/insensitive
- Honest/dishonest
- Kind/unkind
- Cool/uncool

In reality, everyone is occasionally guilty of falling into most of the second terms in these couplets. Interestingly, if we heavily identify with the first term of the couplet, and we get called out, even just a little bit, as occasionally seeming to have some of the second members of these couplets, then our identity feels fundamentally challenged. As an example, I identify with being compassionate, empathetic, and sensitive, so if I am criticized for being less than compassionate, empathetic, and sensitive, then I get defensive, and may even have a mini-identity-crisis.

Healthy people can navigate the couplets above, realizing that, as hard as we try to be on the left side, we can easily slip in the direction of the right side. Therefore, we try to sail into the wind, blowing from the right side; however, we are inevitably blown off into the right side.

With all of this said, we need to affirm that, regardless of all of the good things we might have done, or the bad things that we might have done, in the immediate future, us “good people” might do something immoral, and us “bad people” might do something profoundly moral. So, who is good and who is bad?

Wouldn’t it just be easier, if we agreed that we are all equal in our humanity, which is the only truly important consideration? What follows from an affirmation of our fundamental equality is to question

all of the ways that the people think they are superior and deserve their privileges, while others suffer the horrors of deprivation and inferiority.

(9) **What is real?** There is a great debate about the nature of reality in our mainstream Euro-American culture. Is the universe only made up of matter that can be empirically measured? Is matter just composed of energy, mass, and extension? Is consciousness an accident of certain forms of life? Is organic life, itself, an accident of natural, inorganic processes? Or is consciousness, to varying degrees, a part of matter, and an eternal part of the universe? Or is consciousness a spiritual gift from a deity that exists apart from nature, in some realm of heaven or paradise, where we might go after death? Are our dreams just brain processes that occur while we sleep, or do dreams mean something more about our lives, and perhaps our futures? All of these questions are not answerable by any logical or scientific method. They are presuppositions that we either believe or not. Either way, how we view them define how we think about our lives and deaths. And these differences can be powerfully important and difficult to navigate, when we allude to them in our conversations.

(10) **What is true?** Some people talk about "their truth," as in, "It is my truth that I am uncomfortable around strangers." This kind of truth is the truth of genuine experience. No one can question the truth of people's genuine experience, unless one supposes that other people are being disingenuous about their "truth," or perhaps they are joking about it. If they truly experience discomfort around strangers, then that is true for them. However, let's say we have seen this particular person in the company of strangers, and they appear to be quite comfortable, social, talkative, and relaxed. To this observation, the individual may reply that, "yes, I can see how others might see me as comfortable with strangers, but I assure you that I am quite uncomfortable inside.

Some people may also say that one of their truths is a strong belief in God. Again, they do not need to prove that God exists (which may be difficult), they just need to be authentic about their presupposition that God exists; and this truth, for them, may be explanatory for their other beliefs and behaviors.

If two people report different descriptions of an event, how do we know which one is true? Each person may claim to be giving an accurate description, but a third person may say that the other two are just giving their subjective experience or perspective about the event. If the event is an Unidentified Flying Object (UFO), and the two observers describe it in different ways, then the third person, as an interlocutor, may question the truth of either descriptions. Doubtless, seeing a UFO can be quiet an emotional experience. (I thought I saw one in 1968; though it was later "identified" as an off-course rocket.) Emotional experiences can easily give rise to multiple, dissimilar, descriptions. Therefore, we might wonder about our own descriptions when the event provokes strong emotions.

Key Strategies to Deal with the Elephants in the Room

Views from judgment and compassion: As the metaphor, navigation, suggests, optimally handling difference and conflict is not subject to a simple formula. Yes, there are processes that can be taught, but the problem with difference and conflict is that it often resists simple processes and principles. Often, we find ourselves navigating between polarities, as in, what I call, the views from judgment and compassion. To begin this discussion, we are often taught to make correct judgments about every topic that might come up in our lives:

- How shall we think about politics?
- How shall we think about our health?
- How shall we pick our friends and intimates?
- How shall we think about family members and fellow workers?

The list goes on and on. As we age, we hope to not only make good judgments about these concerns, but even develop some wisdom about them. And we might expect to become well equipped to defend our judgments with arguments full of evidence and experience. Defaulting to the view from judgment means that when one is confronted with a difference or a conflict, one takes the view from judgment and proceeds to make one's case on how to understand or proceed with the difference or conflict. Smart people can provide us with a lot of analysis from the resources that they believe carry a lot of authority, be it academic, religious, or experiential.

However, to be open-minded, we must also be curious about **other people's** judgments. Otherwise, we will simply be in the position of trying to defeat them—either to their faces, or passively, in our minds and in our avoidance of them. Being curious about others means that we might learn from their evidence and experience, which is likely to be different than ours. To be authentically curious about others, we must be empathetic—able to imagine being in their life, with their history, with their personality, and with their aspirations. Because our imagination can be faulty, we need to check out our perceptions of others by paraphrasing their views or asking inquiring questions (not interrogating questions). In doing these things, we gain the view from compassion.

Interestingly, we can error in either direction: too much judgment or too much compassion. As stated above, if our views from judgment are too rigid and dogmatic, we are making a claim that we know better than others about a number of topics. We can appear closed-minded, which can put others off, and prevent effective collaboration. On the other hand, if our views from compassion are too gullible or too divergent from judgments that have the ring of truth, then we may be naïve to default to the view from compassion. Con artists depend on our trust and compassion, and they will use that leverage to

victimize us. By gaining our confidence in their story, they can manipulate us as they desire. Sadly, the whole marketing enterprise is aimed at such manipulation for the interests of manipulator. Arguably, we are being sold in the marketplace of goods and services, but also in beliefs and opinions, and at times, in the larger frameworks of our cultures. Whether we are being exposed to the marketing of consumption, political positions, religious beliefs, or larger worldviews, too much compassion can lead to dangerous groupthink.

In our confrontation with difference or conflict, we need to navigate between the views from judgment and compassion. However, this is not an easy task, especially if the differences or conflicts involve dilemmas, contradictions, and paradoxes. Let's examine these three terms to see what problems we are up against:

Navigating the views from normalization and abnormalization: It is profoundly easy to think of others as abnormal for their slightest eccentricities. On the other hand, it may be quite difficult to reverse this process and normalize someone who strays a bit too far from group norms. This dynamic makes identity groups unnecessarily narrow and homogenous, and wary of diverse analyses. For instance, an identity group of people working to end unnecessarily violent police practice may be diverse in race, orientation, and ability/disability; however, they must conform to a certain analysis of police violence. Those who diverge significantly from this analysis may find themselves shunned, whether they see too many police behaviors as violent, or too few. Groups, such as this example, may splinter apart into new subgroupings that share analyses that are more closely aligned. The overall loss is that the groups become smaller and less able to recruit new members, who might deviate from the "correct" analysis and behaviors.

Navigating how we and others can be so annoying: I think it is fair to say that everyone can annoy everyone else, if they spend enough time with each other. Those of us in long-term relationships, with a spouse, parents, children, relatives, as well as friends and coworkers, certainly have opportunities to be annoyed or to be annoying. Unfortunately, in an individualistic and competitive society, we can mistake annoyance for argument or contestation about who is right and who is wrong; who is good and who is bad. Rather, we need to look closely at the relatively minor things that we find annoying, and wonder how easily those things turned into heated arguments. Wouldn't it be better to just admit that the other person has just done something annoying, or that both of us are annoying each other concerning a certain subject? If we can start off with an affirmation of mutual annoyance (AMA), we could take the wind out an impending thunderstorm, and have a calm discussion about a small bone of contention. As an example, "I know that us disagreeing about how often to wash the dishes can be annoying because this small dispute has come up rather regularly for the last twenty five years, but let's sit down and calmly plan a schedule that will work for both of us."

Navigating moral force and brute force: At least some Western philosophers and some Buddhists fail

to find grounds for any common morality in the world. Further, they find that ethics, in general, are just cultural customs that came into existence for some reason or other—usually in the distant past. They seem to be urging us to accept that humans do what they do, as it is hard to stop them, so why get stressed about it? A "live and let live," or Paul McCartney's "live and let die," philosophy seems a bit like trying to sail a ship without a rudder. But, if you are looking for peace, it might be helpful to give up on justice. Some other philosophers and theologians urge us to put our lives in God's hands and let them(?) decide what to do, and have faith that our actions are all part of God's plans, evidently including nuclear war, waterboarding, and pedophilia… Though my rejoinder to these views is not relentlessly comprehensive, it seems that most of us would agree that morality, of some sort, is better than having to live (or die) under the boot of brute physical and psychological force or leaving our fate up to some all-controlling deity.

Validating dilemmas: These are differences, where one or more people must choose between two equally compelling alternatives, whether ideas, strategies, tactics, values, etc. Because dilemmas offer a choice between two alternatives that are equally attractive or unattractive, there needs to be some strategy for deciding between them. Here is where the default to judgment or compassion can lead to quite different outcomes. Sometimes, if possible, it might be wise to remain undecided, putting off the conflict until more information can be gathered, or where disputants can think about the dilemma more, perhaps gaining more information, consulting others, meditating on it, or searching within themselves for deeper insights or intuitions.

Deconstructing false dilemmas: President Donald Trump said that his dilemma about immigration was between keeping the United States truly safe, and not being considered heartless by people abhorred by separating asylum-seeking parent from their children. This supposed dilemma can be considered false because the real dilemma that Trump does not want to be considered a racist, while needing to please his base, who want white people to continue to dominate the USA, and not share power with the nonwhite population, that is soon to become the majority of citizens.

Deconstruct contradictions: These are statements that are opposites of one another, or at the least, undermine each other. Contradictions can quickly fuel a dispute or conflict because they are inherently confrontational. Usually, it is best to try to unpack these opposite claims by having disputants explain how they have come to such different positions. This unpacking can include background stories, evidence, motivation, aspiration, and identity concerns. With more information supporting each side of the contradiction, mutual understanding can hopefully replace conflict escalation.

Embrace paradoxes: These are two claims that, when combined as true, seem to be absurd or illogical. In our discussion of the views from judgment and compassion, it is a paradox to believe that there is wisdom in both views, even though they seem to contradict each other, and provide us with seemingly irresolvable dilemmas.

Human needs and human wants: Theoretically, humans have basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, companionship, identity, a healthy environment, education, careers, medical care, hope for the future and some sort of retirement in our elder years. On this view, we may want all kinds of other things to keep us happy, amused, and show off to our friends, but those are wants, not needs. Basic human rights are about needs, not wants. No one can assert that they have a human right to wealth, power, and privilege. Well, maybe there are a few people who would do this. Billionaires want more money and power; and if taxes and regulations prevent them from having these things, then they will fight those taxes and regulations, like their lives depended on it. Maybe they really feel that way. It can be said that the rich need more wealth and power, just as addicts need more of the stuff that constitutes their addiction. Ironically, wealth and power does not make one more secure, as there are always threats to that wealth and power. I know a multimillionaire who worries about being homeless, if banks, the investment market, and the property market, all collapse at the same time. I have another multimillionaire friend, who worries if he needs an ultra-expensive medical operation, he will not be able to afford it. If we had an economy that provided the basic needs, listed above, then no one would fear being homeless or needing an operation that they could not afford.

Navigating Dilemmas in the Interpersonal Field of Conflict Processes:

The following are dilemmas that occur within interpersonal conflicts. These conflicts may involve from two to several people, but is primarily about the relationships between them.

Conflict processes should immediately be terminated, if it becomes apparent that one of the disputants is at risk of abuse or violence by any continuing contact with another disputant.

As an example, in a divorce mediation, it may come to light that one spouse has been physically or emotionally abusing the other spouse. In such cases, the mediator's priority is to implement a protective strategy for the abused spouse, while terminating the mediation—to the extent that police force may be necessary to remove the abuser from the premises. Ideally, there will be other mediators and trauma counselors available in situations where evidence of abuse might emerge. These professionals should ideally confer with each other to decide on the protocols to follow or to adapt the protocols to fit the uniqueness of the situation.

Navigating these challenging circumstances may require the advice of legal counsel. The dilemma here is that the discovery of abuse may require the rejection of the collaborative process, in favor of a protective strategy for the abused person. Deciding that it is wise to break the collaborative agreement amongst the disputants constitutes an abrupt change in the process, which can enrage the disputant being accused of abuse, which will likely deepen the conflict, and perhaps pose a deeper threat. This kind of

decision may be gut-level for the facilitator of the process. It would be crucial to have a separate meeting (caucus) with the abused disputant to get a better sense of the depth of the threat.

Conflict processes skills can be used to give people the illusion that their complaints are being taken seriously.

This tactic, which I call fake listening, undermines the reality of difference by fake validation. In this manner, one can be deceived by another person's conflict processes skills, which make it appear that progress is being made in understanding difference and creating a collaborative and productive approach to a conflict. This deceptive use of conflict processes skills also undermines the integrity of conflict processes itself, so it is doubly dangerous.

I had a disagreement about a billing error over the telephone with a company representative. The conversation was getting heated, so I asked for help from the representative's supervisor. When the supervisor got on the line, the tone of the conversation changed dramatically. The supervisor validated my experience, saying that she would be having the same experience, if she was in my shoes. I calmed down quickly, and found myself fully accepting that following final statement by the supervisor: "I'm afraid there is nothing that we can do to help you." In this way, her conflict processes skills were used to pacify me, not to create any collaborative solution to the problem.

Someone's use of conflict management skills to win the dispute, surreptitiously, is certainly manipulative and unethical, but as a disputant, I need to be aware that I can be duped by the seeming validation and emotional support that I receive from another disputant. In the illustration that I just gave, I needed to refuse to be pacified and to escalate the conflict by asserting/demanding that the customer service department respect my claim or that there will be legal or reputational consequences. Navigating differences does not always mean taking the compassion view of those who are trying to manipulate us. Sometimes, we need to call them out on their unethical practice and demand justice.

Sometimes, strong emotions need to be present for people to take conflicts seriously.

Healthy people should have access to a full range of emotions from the positive (happiness, laughter, serenity, etc.) to the negative (unhappiness, anger, frustration, outrage, etc.) Some conflicts require disputants to express these strong emotions, so that they can communicate the emotional dimensions of their experiences. However, some disputants are uncomfortable expressing or witnessing such strong emotions. Navigating this dilemma requires that disputants remain sensitive to the limits of each other's emotional capacities. Sadly, it is not uncommon for people to be re-traumatized by strong emotions, so disputants need to be sensitive to that potential.

Sometimes, accommodating others is a productive and just way to respond to conflict.

As a middle class, white male, I know that my race, class, and gender have afforded me privileges that are not always accessible to people of other races, classes, genders, orientations, and identities. To navigate this dilemma, I feel a special obligation to accommodate others whom I perceive as having been denied the privileges that I have had. Though all conflict processes require a certain level of collaboration, there are certain commitments to overcoming inequality and injustice that also need to be embedded in the process. If disputants are simply urged to find a process that combines the current interests of the disputants, in a way that both disputants feel that they have had their interests met, this overly simple process ignores the cultural and historical inequities and injustices between the classes, races, genders, orientations, and identities. To facilitate such a process is complex because it might seem that bringing privilege or oppression into every dispute overly complicates the process. Yes, it can overly complicate the process, but ignoring inequities and injustices may also undermine the sustainability of the processes created, without a firm foundation. Sadly, some disputants use their status as social and economic victims to manipulate collaborative processes. I believe that privileged people, such as myself, can accommodate oppressed people without succumbing to being victimized ourselves. Navigating this dilemma may be a delicate balance, but it can legitimately enter the collaborative discussion, if it is going to fully embrace the humanity of participants.

Sometimes, avoiding conflict is the best way to 'pick your battles'.

In a complex world, we often need to set our priorities and pacing in a way that means we address the most important conflicts and differences in our lives. This requires us to let the seemingly less important conflicts and differences go. To navigate the dilemma of how to set priorities, and pace one's life in a way that does not add stress, one might need to consult with trusted friends, family members, mediators, or psychotherapists to determine the conflicts and differences to confront, and the ones to let go, at least for the moment. Deciding this alone may just mean that we are repeating bad priority and pacing habits.

Sometimes, one needs to wait for the best time to confront differences or conflicts.

Privacy might be necessary to address a conflict. An audience might turn the conflict into a spectator sport, needlessly escalating it. Finding a calm place where the processing of the conflict will not be interrupted. Try to pick a time that will not feel rushed, and will fit each of the disputants' work/life schedule. Because collaborative processes can be fragile and filled with emotion, it is best to reschedule meetings, whenever disputants are feeling particularly vulnerable. Any stressor in a disputant's life, physical, mental, or emotional, can make collaborative processes difficult, so check in with participants often.

Sometimes, formal mediation or psychotherapeutic interventions are counterproductive.

Formal processes, whether hosted by a mediator/facilitator or a psychotherapist, may be too intimidating

for disputants who are unfamiliar with these processes, and therefore uncomfortable and/or unable to advocate for themselves or be able to engage in authentic empathy for other disputants. In these cases, a more informal or more culturally appropriate process must be used to work through a conflict or difference. However, a disputant's mental health issues can also undermine an effective collaborative process. Navigating mental health issues is usually best undertaken with the assistance of a mental health professional. Absent such a resource, navigating difference and conflict requires sensitivity to mental health issues, which we all have to one extent or another.

Sometimes, expressing one's thoughts, beliefs, values, feelings, and experiences can get in the way of resolving conflicts.

It is easy to get sidetracked, when working through a conflict or difference. Conflicts, of any kind, can trigger emotions, memories, values, and experiences that can get in the way of attending to the details of a conflict or difference. If they are too distracting, it might be helpful to suggest getting back to the planned agenda. However, sometimes, these issues must be addressed in order to reach some agreement, or that will give disputants a sense that progress is being made. Learning about the emotions, memories, values, and experiences of disputants can be a valuable first step, which justifies putting aside the more goal-oriented agenda, and delay the direct work with the conflict or difference. Navigating this dilemma requires check-ins with participants to see if the priorities and pacing of the process is working reasonably well for everyone.

Sometimes, the adversarial justice system is the best way to address interpersonal disputes and conflicts.

Often, in small claims courts, judges allow disputants the option to have their case mediated by court appointed mediators, instead of the judge making a decision. The advantage to disputants is that they will be able to go over details and experiences, for which a judge may not have the time, or inclination, to listen. The disadvantage of mediating a dispute is that it may be more time-consuming, and the judge may have a history of being a fair arbitrator. Furthermore, a court decision may have, or seem to have, more authority than a mediated decision. In civil proceedings of more serious matters, the lawyers for each disputant may work together to suggest a settlement, often financial, that disputants come to accept as fair, perhaps at the urging of their lawyers. It is important to note that billions of dollars are spent, yearly, to litigation attorneys, so the side-effect of successful legal settlements can be astronomical attorney fees, whereas mediators or facilitators can be much less expensive to hire. Some litigation lawyers serve as mediators or facilitators, so they can cover both bases with similar fees. Non-lawyer mediators or facilitators tend to be a significantly cheaper alternative. Navigating this dilemma requires disputants and their advisors need to consider the costs and benefits of legal or extralegal processes.

Navigating Dilemmas in the Social/Cultural Field of Conflict Processes:

The following are concerns about conflict processes within social tensions. As before, I analyze these dilemmas to show that navigating between each side is likely to be more successful, rather than adhering to only one side.

Intergroup contact can reduce the tension between dominant groups and oppressed groups, and make it seem that the sympathy expressed by dominant group members means that they are committing themselves, as allies, for the long-haul struggle for social justice.

Dominant group members can be authentically sympathetic to the plight of oppressed group members, and that sympathy may seem like the conflict between dominant group members and oppressed group members is heading for processes. However, this appearance of impending processes may be a mirage. Any reduction in tension between dominant groups and oppressed groups must be maintained for true processes, and social change, can take place. Dominant group members must express more than sympathy for change, they must prove themselves committed to change over the course of what is usually a long struggle toward justice and peace. (Reference related article, here) The dilemma here requires us to navigate between being too confident in the commitments of sympathetic dominant group members and being too cynical about their commitment.

Conflict processes, involving protracted dialogues between disputants, can be used by those with power and status to pacify those with significantly lower power and status.

Seemingly endless negotiations and dialogues, while at the heart of conflict processes, can be used to falsely illustrate that progress is being made, while in reality, the status quo is being defended. In these cases, more confrontational tactics need to occur to show that, indeed, progress is not being made. Ideally, these confrontational tactics will be nonviolent, though oppressed people, who are already hobbled by injustice, can be made doubly frustrated by these pacification tactics. Furthermore, it must be remembered that nonviolent resistance and conflict processes should go hand-in-hand to procure social justice. They should never be pitted against each other. Navigating between the two is a challenge, and will require a diverse set of strategists to collaborate on an appropriate balance.

In social, cultural, environmental, policy, business, or union conflicts, it is often thought that adversarial, legal, contractual, policy, and legislative processes are superior to conflict processes process.

However, in some cases, these more public disputes may, indeed, be more appropriately addressed by conflict processes, which might involve forgiveness, atonement, restitution, restoration, and therapeutic interventions, rather than adversarial processes. Clearly, adversarial and legal processes may be more

appropriate when the criminality is severe, or when there is too little trust between the people involved. In yet other cases, both conflict processes and legal processes may productively complement each other. The key insight here is that there are many ways to address public disputes, and planners need to consider many options, as well as combining options together, recognizing that every public dispute has unique features that require unique processes to productively address it.

Conflict processes skills are not skills that adults can optimally learn, and easily implement, like learning to install a toilet by watching a YouTube video.

This is true because so many of us learned conflict domination and conflict avoidance skills throughout our lives, and these "skills" are hard to unlearn. Age-appropriate conflict processes skills need to be learned from infancy, through all grade-levels in early education, through higher education. They also need to be integrated into parenting education, which also must be universalized, so that generations of youth are not burdened by the scars of abusive parenting.

Students spend a lot of time learning algebra, at earlier and earlier ages, but how many of those students use algebra as adults in their daily lives? On the other hand, we often use conflict processes skills, and parenting skills, daily. The dilemma here is in navigating the quandary about how conflict processes skills can become a part of our cultural experience, given the limitations of our educational system to incorporate this kind of training, when so much is asked of our educators today, as career skills are becoming exponentially more complex, thanks to computer systems and globalization. My encouraging observation is that many of my students use conflict processes verbiage, even as they enter their first conflict processes course.

***Sometimes, conflicts need to be escalated to be brought into the open*.**

If the differences, conflicts, and injustices between people are hidden, it may be necessary to escalate the conflict for it to be noticed and visible to a wider population of people. Navigating this dilemma is difficult because some conflicts are best resolved by keeping them as private as possible, whereas other conflicts require the public's attention. Conflicts, like apartheid in South Africa needed to be escalated globally, so that a meaningful divestment in that country could put significant pressure on the white-ruled government to begin negotiating the end to their inhuman policies toward people of color, and usher in regime-change.

Navigating Dilemmas in the Global Field of Conflict Processes:

In the textbook, *Contemporary Conflict* Processes (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall), the following three conflict processes dilemmas are offered, with my paraphrasing. In all three, I aim to show that

any strict adherence to one side of these dilemmas, over the other, will be counterproductive, while developing collaborative strategies between the sides to these dilemmas, is likely to be the more successful strategy.

***Conflict processes, as a soft power approach, is ineffective and dangerous in a world where antagonistic, irreconcilable individuals and groups, are committed to violence and dishonesty to achieve their goal.*(Ramsbotham, et al).**

Here, the dilemma is between choosing soft power (nonviolence) and hard paper (violence) to achieve laudable goals. In a world that often functions through both direct and structural violence, it can be argued that positive change requires the ability to violently overthrow both oppressive people and institutions to establish democracy and benevolent institutions. However, nonviolent change has been documented to be more often successful in accomplishing these ends, without resorting to violence. Still, in some situations, violence has also been successful, so the dilemma remains as to which tactic to employ. Navigating this dilemma seems to require that change agents exhaust their nonviolent strategies first, before resorting to any violence, while keeping the strategies of minimal violence, as a possibility. Hopefully, this minimal violence is limited to self-defense and/or the destruction of property that represents an obstacle to social or environmental justice.

Some regime-change movements have strategically employed both tactics. So, a way to navigate this dilemma, in these circumstances, may be to maximally employ nonviolence, and minimally employ violence, in cases only where there is a necessity to defend areas occupied by liberation forces. In the past, it has often seemed necessary for liberation forces to physically occupy the structures of power, it is now conceivable to create a shadow governance structure, electronically, that could gain strength and scope, as the existing governance structure weakens due an absence of popular support.

***Conflict processes seeks to reconcile interests that cannot be reconciled because the powerful have no interest in sharing power with the marginalized powerless*. (Ramsbotham, et al).**

This statement implies that people generally advocate for their self- and class-interests, unilaterally, with no consideration for the interests of other individuals or classes. Whereas, social change advocates often come from a wide variety of class, race, ethnicity, and other identifications and orientations, throughout the power spectrum. Positive social change that addresses widespread inequality, oppression, abuse, and other kinds of suffering, is most successful when victims of oppression do not deny the compassion, permeating all classes and backgrounds, when they seek allies.

However, there will always be a certain number of hardcore-powerful people, who doggedly and single-mindedly pursue their self- and class-interests, even in the face of obvious mass suffering. They rationalize that their power is earned and deserved, while those who suffer under a culture's structure have brought that suffering upon themselves, due to laziness, poor life planning, lack of exercising their prerogatives, ignoring opportunities, and playing the victim-card to gain sympathy and charity.

To navigate this dilemma, I suggest that we abandon the view that most people limit their advocacy to simple self- or class-interest. It is not that difficult for the average person to identify with someone who suffers. Martin Luther King knew that videos of police dogs, swinging batons, and firehoses, unleashed onto African American children, women, and men, would turn the hearts of masses of white Americans, and he was correct because our hearts and minds change when we graphically experience injustice and suffering. Ironically, assuming that people unequivocally stick to their self- and class-interests may contribute to them doing so because powerful people may feel attacked, when they feel stereotyped in this way. Again, navigating this dilemma requires that activists not be too trusting nor too cynical of members of dominant groups.

The western assumptions imbedded in conflict processes are not applicable to many non-western cultures. **(Ramsbotham, et al).**

Nonviolent and collaborative processes are both ancient and are found in most cultures worldwide. Indeed, specific methods of conflict processes can have important cultural values and processes imbedded in them. Therefore, a way to navigate this dilemma is for those interested in enhancing their conflict processes capacities may, first, want to fully embrace their own culture's traditional conflict processes principles and practices, then second, import and translate conflict processes from other cultures that may be useful to them. Navigating this dilemma requires local people to translate their culture's conflict processes practices to outsiders, while translating foreign culture conflict processes practices to insiders. The result will be a synthesis of practices that optimize the productivity of a culturally-appropriate conflict processes strategy.

Chapter One: Course Pedagogy and Course Overview

Navigating Different Learning and Teaching Styles

Questions:

1. How should we combine or emphasize different modes of teaching/learning?
2. What does bel hooks suggest as important teaching techniques?
3. What is engaged pedagogy, and what are its strengths and limits?
4. What is disengaged pedagogy, and what are its strengths and limits? Authorities with analyses: telling learners how to think
5. How is learning a conversation?
6. How is teaching storytelling?

An important identity difference within the educational system is the powerful identity of the teacher and the sometimes-infantilized identity of the student. Blythe McVicker Clinchy uses the term “connected knowing,” where people connect by affirming their experienced commonalities, and also validate their experienced differences. Connected knowing is contrasted with disconnected knowing, where knowledge is abstracted from experience, rather than imbedded within experience. Disconnected knowing is practiced when the teacher imparts knowledge to the student, rather than creating a connected experience in the classroom.

bel hooks has helped us develop an “engaged pedagogy” in her writing, “Teaching to Transgress.” If we engage each other as equals in the classroom, where each student and each teacher can share their unique experiences, in the way that they inform the academic content of the course, then we can overcome the power inequity that undermines the potential for collaborative education. Furthermore, teaching does not need to focus on lectures and note-taking. In can often be more productive, as well as interesting, if it stimulates conversations and storytelling.

In mainstream Euro-American societies, teaching has often been reduced to teachers telling students how to think about the subject matter of the course. In courses where memorization and mechanical relationships are being explained, this authority-centered approach may be appropriate. However, in courses that touch on subjects, where student have lived experiences (which include most of the liberal arts and sciences), an authority-centered approach will often deny the validity of at least some of

students' experiences. This is unnecessarily oppressive and coercive. Differing student experiences must be embraced, otherwise, the domination of "marginal" student experiences will continue, and valid difference and conflict will be denied and made invisible within academic culture.

Dilemmas to be Investigated in the Following Chapters

1. How much do I choose my identity and how much does my social group determine my identity?
2. If we internalize more than one identity, how do we navigate the conflicts between these identities?
3. Can connection between people be both real and an illusion?
4. Expressing strong emotions is important because one should have a full range of emotions, and emotional communication helps us understand each other; however, expressing strong emotions can be experienced by others as abusive, retraumatizing, and/or a micro-aggression.
5. Is it possible to genuinely think together with others, or is any perception of connected thinking just an illusion or a coincidence?
6. Does Heidegger's advice concerning "meditative thinking" depend on us giving up the notion that each individual is radically isolated from others?
7. Can we resolve the conflict between abstract value (money) and the real values of human community and the collective generosity that it requires?
8. Given human nature, as we know it, is economic justice possible, and can class conflicts be resolved?
9. Sometimes punishment can be transformative, and sometimes atonement can be transformative; how do we know which one will work in a specific case?
10. Is punishment or atonement required for those who have benefited from oppressive systems; or can they be forgiven?
11. Is knowledge solid or liquid or both?
12. Is it possible to reconcile science with mysticism?
13. Can the fundamental worldview conflict between indigenous and civilized people be resolved, and is such a resolution necessary for global sustainability?
14. How do we reconcile individualism with commitments to the common good?
15. How do we know when interpersonal violence is justified?

16. How do when know when military violence is justified?
17. How should we distinguish between goodness and evil?
18. Are professional ethics necessarily culturally biased?
19. Can dominating cultures overcome their cultural biases that undermine the power and autonomy of dominated cultures?
20. If we can create a universal global ethics, how can we motivate and enforce it; or must we give up the project or a universal global ethics?
21. How do we reconcile the forces of "power-over" with the forces of "power-with"?
22. Given that all of us may have used manipulative games for personal gain or to protect ourselves, how can we avoid this practice when it is so deeply engrained in our mainstream culture?
23. Abundance and diversity are indications of public ecosystem health. However, economic wealth is correlated with the private accumulation of resources that increase their value with scarcity and demand. Can these two seemingly opposed values be reconciled?
24. Modern civilization had created an industrial-technological dream world for some people, while keeping others in a real world of utter poverty an ecological collapse. Can these conflicting worlds be reconciled?
25. When environmental policymakers use conflict resolution processes to find consensus between those who profit from environmental destruction, and those who want to stop these practices, doesn't conflict resolution become a tool for putting a happy face on continued environmental destruction?
26. Is anarchy self-defeating by trying to create a collaborative society amongst people whose identity depends on having power and privilege over others?
27. How can egalitarian collaborative processes gain acceptance, when so many contemporary conflict resolution practices are enmeshed in corporate, judicial, and bureaucratic institutions that are dedicating to maintaining their domination over large masses of people?
28. How can we personally enjoy the benefits of the virtual technological world, without aggravating our connection to the natural world?
29. Contemporary mainstream cultures increasingly adopt abstract and virtual modes of framing the world and its elements; do these world-framing devices encourage us to reduce our view of the world and others to generalized categories and stereotypes?

Questions to be Investigated in the Following Chapters

Chapter Two: Navigating Identity Differences

Part One: Identity Conflicts

Readings:

Cleaver, E., & Geismar, Maxwell. (1967). Soul on ice (First ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Questions:

1. Who am I?
2. Who am I, as one who wishes to work positively with conflicts?
3. Who are others, whose identities are different by virtue of their histories, aspirations, and identities? 4. How do we distinguish between individualism, tribalism, and hybridism?
4. How are identities based on truths than can be doubted?
5. What is the “radical equality of belief and value presuppositions”?
6. How are identities, bonding, and loyalties fixed and fluid?
7. How is conflict processes biased toward self-interest, individualism, and maximization (win-win) of self-interests?
8. Do indigenous people know who they are through traditional rites of passage?
9. Have civilized people lost rites of passage, or have they become rites of identity group membership?
10. Are today’s identity groups different that traditional tribes, villages, communities, and neighborhoods?
11. Do identity groups enforce strict standards of conformity, even as they embrace some

diversity?

12. Do identity groups behave as mobs or echo chambers online?
13. Can political correctness be used to suppress nonconformity?
14. How do identity groups behave at colleges and universities, inside and outside of the classroom?
15. Does one discover their identity in an identity group, or is one assigned an identity in an identity group?
16. When one strives for a higher status, is one trying to become part of another more superior identity group?
17. Do people compete to become part of a high-status identity group: a group of winners, cool, smart, competent, fun, etc.?
18. Do people seeking power try to join privileged identity groups, and move away from lesser identity groups, even while they maintain membership in a nostalgic identity group?
19. How is liberation from oppression complicated by identity group membership of both oppressor and oppressed?
20. How do identity group membership play roles in almost every conflict?
21. How do the roles of "mediator" and "facilitator" bring problematic identity problems into conflict processes?
22. How does internalized oppression play a role in conflict processes?
23. Can anyone escape internalized oppression of some type?

Part Two: Paradoxical Identity

Readings:

"The Conflict Resolver's (workers) Paradoxical Identity: From Conflicted to Hybrid" by Robert Gould

Questions:

1. Should conflict workers develop mixed identities, so that they can internalize different cultural sensibilities?

2. When conflict workers develop mixed identities, do they become hybrids or can they still maintain a singular identity?
3. Are conflict workers translators between cultural identities?
4. Are bicultural or multicultural particularly adept at being cultural translators?
5. Alternatively, should conflict workers focus on helping disputants communicate their differences and uniqueness's, without the conflict worker needing to hybridize?
6. How do our histories make each of us unique, even identical twins?
7. Should conflict workers help disputants develop positive identities, so that they can escape the dynamic of dysfunctionally acting out their negative identities?

Chapter Three: Navigating Connection/Disconnection; Full Range of Emotions and Emotional Abuse

Part One: Connection and Disconnection

Readings:

- Clinchy, B. M. (1994). *On Critical Thinking and Connected Knowing*. In Walters, K. (ed.). Re-Thinking Reason: New Perspectives in Critical Thinking (Teacher empowerment and school reform). Albany: State University of New York Press
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and Thou* (W. Kaufman, Trans.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to authentically connect across difference?
2. What is the distinction between connection and disconnection?

3. Is disconnection and alienation becoming a widespread cultural experience in the USA?
4. Do we feel stuck inside our brain and our bodies, unable to reach others?
5. Are individualism and a focus on self-interest at the root of disconnection and alienation?
6. Do we market ourselves to others?
7. Is self-promotion a way of life in the USA?
8. Have we created a persona for ourselves that will help us have friends and a career?
9. Do we have different personas for different interactions?
10. What does it mean to be a professional?
11. Do we have a conflict professional persona, and does that get in the way of conflict work?
12. What does it mean to listen for understanding?
13. What is the interplay of experience, emotions, and thoughts?
14. How do we distinguish between intuition, cognition, emotional intelligence, culture, and transcendence?
15. What does it mean to be working positively with conflict?

Part Two: Full range of emotions and emotional abuse

Readings:

Thich Nhat Hanh on Dealing with Anger

"Demonizing the Hater" by Robert Gould

Questions:

1. How do with distinguish the terms: anger, outrage, hostility, frustration, contempt, disrespect?
2. What is the upside and downside of our emotional suppression bias against potentially disruptive emotions?
3. How can we more easily express and manage difficult emotions, such as:

   –impulsivity;

–triggered annoyance;

–cultural triggers;

–trauma triggers;

–grumpiness;

–self-disappointments;

–loneliness;

–low self-esteem?

4. How are emotions used to dominate others?
5. How can emotions be abusive?
6. How can expressing emotions trigger retraumatization in others?
7. How does conflict work frequently engage strong emotions, and what is the best way to help disputants express their emotions, without domination, abuse or retraumatization?
8. Do conflict processes have a bias against strong emotions; and how is that problematic?
9. Sometimes anger expresses deep hate; how can that be handled in conflict work?
10. What is the upside and downside of demonizing the hater?
11. Why is there a hate crime bias in our thinking about haters?
12. How do we navigating hate, free, true speech?
13. How does righteous hate against haters add more hate to the world, and is this always the case?

Chapter Four: Navigating Disengaged and Engaged Thinking and Heidegger's Meditative Thinking

Part One: Disengaged and Engaged Thinking

Readings:

"Engaged Thinking" by Robert Gould

"Engaged Writing: Mediating Inner and Outer Narratives by Robert Gould

Questions:

1. How do different kinds of thinking help or hinder the process of navigating difference?
2. How do logical and critical thinking help us overcome groupthink, but still pose a hindrance to the process of navigating difference?
3. Why does the field of informal logic have an obsession with fallacies as irrational, when they can often be reasonable?
4. What is connected knowing, as expressed by engaged thinking, and how do they help us navigate engagement and disengagement?
5. How does engaged writing help us with engaged thinking?
6. What is contextual thinking, and how does it assume that we live in a non-reducible world that can be experience through personal and authentic knowledge?
7. How does contextual thinking get us unstuck from abstract thinking, oversimplifications, and overgeneralizations?
8. What is ordinary language thinking, and how does it help us escape the confines of jargon and unnecessary abstraction?
9. What is continuum thinking, and how does it get us unstuck from polar thinking?
10. What is paradoxical thinking, and how can thinking opposites at once help us overcome cognitive dissonance?
11. What is flexible thinking, and how does it help us navigate between liquid and solid knowledge?

12. How can we mediate between inner and outer narratives?
13. How do other human expressions of self, culture, environment, genetics, narrative, and group dynamics help or hinder the process of navigating difference?

Part Two: Heidegger's Meditative Thinking:

Readings:

"Memorial Address" by Martin Heidegger

"Insights from Heidegger's Meditative Thinking that Deepens Conflict Processes Practice" by Robert Gould

Questions:

1. What are Heidegger's four ways to be a meditative thinking?
2. How is meditative thinking useful for conflict workers?

Chapter Five: Navigating Abundance and Scarcity; Class Conflicts and Economic Justice

Part One: Abundance and Scarcity

Readings:

"Abundance, Scarcity, and Violence" by Robert Gould

Questions:

1. Did Adam Smith suggest that capitalism is a win/win exchange?
2. How is money oppressive amorality?
3. What are the alternatives to money (gifts/trade)?

4. What if we only needed money for luxuries; where all necessities are free?
5. What economies are based on renewable cycles and relationships?

Part Two: Class Conflicts and Economic Justice

Readings:

"Shadowy Lines That Still Divide" by Janny Scott and David Leonhardt

Questions:

1. How are class labels both abstract and experiential?
2. How does CR have a middle-class bias?
3. How can navigating difference address the wealth divide?

Chapter Six: Navigating Forgiveness and Atonement:

Part One: Interpersonal Forgiveness and Atonement

Readings:

"Five Forgiveness Assessments Recommended for Conflict Resolution Processes" by Robert Gould

Questions:

1. What is the role of atonement and forgiveness in restorative justice?
2. What are the five forgiveness assessments recommended for conflict resolution processes?
3. What is the mediation bias regarding forgiveness?
4. How do forgiveness and atonement help self-reinvention?

5. How do forgiveness and atonement help with trauma and moral injury recovery?

Part Two: Societal Forgiveness and Atonement

Readings:

"The Necessity of Forgiveness in the Struggle for Freedom from Oppression" by Robert Gould (published: get approval to use)

Questions:

1. How is forgiveness helpful in the struggle for freedom and oppression?
2. Should prisons be abolished?
3. Are shunning, hospitalization, education, and guaranteed annual income workable alternatives to prisons?

Chapter Seven: Navigating Solid, Liquid, and Mystical Knowledge

Part One: Solid and Liquid Knowledge

Readings:

"Feelings and Perceptions" by Thich Nhat Hanh

"Time is the Flux of Duration" by Henri Bergson

Questions:

1. How is CR biased by its commitment to dogmatic/solid thinking?
2. What are the consequences, when it is assumed that presuppositional beliefs are true, and therefore "solid"?

3. What beliefs can be taken as certain and true?
4. How interrelated are notions of truth, complexity, dogmatism, certainty, and order?
5. How do abstractions and logic become the basis for knowledge?
6. How do experience and context become a basis for knowledge?
7. Is it possible and practical to suppose that paradox, simplicity/elegance, uncertainty, relativism, chaos, mystery, and recognizing the limits of knowledge can become a way of navigating conflict?
8. How does Bergson's view of time and space create a way to experience timelessness and spacelessness?

Part Two: Mystical Knowledge

Readings:

Huxley, A. (2021). *The doors of perception*. Strelbytskyy Multimedia Publishing.

Shrader, D. W. (2008, January). Seven characteristics of mystical experiences. In *Sixth Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities*

Questions:

1. What is an altered state of consciousness?
2. Is ordinary consciousness really an altered state, and is an altered state really true consciousness?
3. Is mysticism an element in many religions?
4. Does mysticism exist in some forms of atheism?
5. Is it possible to reconcile science and mysticism?
6. Do psychedelic drugs engender authentic mysticism?
7. Can three days in the wilderness engender authentic mysticism?
8. Do traditional, pre-civilization, indigenous people live in a mystical reality?
9. How does mysticism alter our experience of time and space?
10. How does mysticism transform conflict practices?

Chapter Eight: Navigating the Difference between Indigenous Societies and Civilization; Different Concepts of Individualism

Part One: Conflict between Indigenous Societies and Civilization

Readings:

Burkhart, B. Y. (2004). What Coyote and Thales can teach us: An outline of American Indian epistemology. *American Indian thought: philosophical essays*, 15-26.

Questions:

1. What is the fundamental worldview conflict?
2. How is the fundamental worldview conflict ignored by biases toward civilized and scientific reductionism?
3. In our mainstream culture, how strong is the imperative to seek harmony with nature?

Part Two: Differing Conceptions of Individualism

Readings:

Moeller, H. G. (2004). New Confucianism and the semantics of individuality. a Luhmannian analysis. *Asian Philosophy*, *14*(1), 25-39.

Questions:

1. What is the distinction between exclusive and inclusive individualism?

Chapter Nine: Navigating Nonviolence and Violence; Pacifism and War

Part One: Violence and Nonviolence

Readings:

Ryan, C. (1994). The One Who Burns Herself for Peace. *Hypatia*, *9*(2), 21-39.

Questions:

1. What is nonviolent communication?
2. How is healing the alleviation of suffering, as well as making others and oneself whole?

Part Two: Pacifism and War

Readings:

Gould, R. (2010). Are Pacifists Cowards?: A Consideration of this Question in Reference to Heroic Warrior Courage. *The Acorn*, *14*(1), 19-26.

Questions:

1. How can pacifism be expressed as courage and/or cowardice?
2. How is fighting to protect what one cares about wrong?
3. What is worth protecting violently?

    +oneself

    +close others

    +distant others

    +country

    +identity

    +principle

4. What is minimal violence pacifism?

Chapter Ten: Navigating Goodness and Evil; Professional Ethics: Strength and Weakness

Part One: Goodness and Evil

Readings:

Hallie, P. (1981). From cruelty to goodness. *Hastings Center Report*, 23-28.

Birmingham, P. (2003). Holes of oblivion: The banality of radical evil. *Hypatia, 18*(1), 80-103.

Questions:

1. How do power, wealth, and status so easily turn evil?

+Moral commitments to self/close others/distant others

+Healthy and unhealthy competitiveness

+bullying as winners need losers

2. How is dishonesty the enemy of conflict processes, collaboration, and community?

+Fake news

+Secrecy and lack of transparency

+Toxic ethical environments and the experiences of gas-lighting and powerlessness

3. How is healing basic to goodness?

+Healing, takes time

+Evil is both quick and structurally slow

4. How is goodness a kind of welcoming?
5. What is the banality of evil?

Part Two: Professional Ethics: Strength and Weakness

Questions:

1. What is the distinction between moral strength and moral weakness?

2. What is moral agency?
3. How does groupthink affect professional ethics?
4. How does relativism affect professional ethics?
5. How does determinism affect professional ethics?
6. How does faith and fate affect professional ethics?
7. What is the distinction between financial strength and moral strength?
8. How does navigating difference transform professional ethics?
9. How can we deepen our conscience through diverse dialogues?

Chapter Eleven: Navigating Global Ethics Theories/Processes and Motivating/Enforcing Global Ethics

Part One: Navigating Global Ethics Theories/Processes

Questions:

1. What does global ethics look like from a conflict process perspective?

+Western abstract/contextless/disconnected

2. Is there a Western philosophical bias in global ethics
3. How do we enforce global ethics?

+Authoritarian or democratic?

Chapter Twelve: Navigating Abuse of Power/ Manipulative Games People Play:

Part One: Sharing Power and Abusing Power:

Questions:

1. How should conflict workers understand power?
2. What is the distinction between power-over and power-with?
3. How is power handled within collaborative processes?

+Power differences

+Boundary-setting

+Adversarial and accommodation conflict styles

4. How is life a game to win or lose?

+Manipulation

+Maintaining control and order

+Domination as being boss

+Playing on others' weaknesses

+Endless criticism (No 5 to 1)

Part Two: Navigating Manipulative Games

Questions:

1. How is dishonesty as central to game-playing?
2. What other manipulative games do disputants play?

+Rhetorical Devices

+White lies

+Social exclusion

+Passive lies

+No Transparency

+Lies as mistakes

+Everybody lies

+Allowing people to be misled

+Marketing as lying

Chapter Thirteen: Navigating Environmental Conflicts

Part One: Abundance and Scarcity Thinking for the Environment

Questions:

1. What are the connections between abundance, scarcity, and violence against nature?
2. What are the perils and positives to the use of abundance and scarcity thinking?
3. What is the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic (instrumental) values?

Part Two: Environmental Conflict Processes

Questions:

1. What is the dilemma of facilitating environmental conflicts, while coming to grips with ecocide?
2. Is there a democratic solution to ecocide, or will we need to turn to authoritarianism?
3. What is morally wrong about culling endangered species to keep their gene pool diverse?
4. Does preserving each individual species life and controlling reproduction undermine species survival?
5. How can we navigate this dilemma?

Chapter Fourteen: Navigating Anarchism as Collaboration and Current Political World

Part One: Anarchism as Collaboration

Questions

1. How is collaborative anarchism a revolution we can win-win?
2. How is collaboration central to conflict processes?
3. Why should anarchism embrace collaboration as a central principle?

Part Two: Navigating Current Political World

Questions

1. How can contemporary political party conflicts benefit from collaborative processes?
2. How can collaborative processes improve political interactions with the news media?

Chapter Fifteen: Navigating Virtual World Conflicts: How Electronic Devices Shape Us

Part One: Personal Conflicts with Technology

Questions

1. Are electronic devices more than tools, communication, and resources?
2. How are electronic devices addictions and distractions?
3. How is computer technology hyper-logical, abstract, and context-denying?

Part Two: Virtual World Conflicts with the Natural and International Worlds

Questions

1. How are electronic devices world-framing devices?
2. Is there a war where computer technology is battling users and nature?
3. How are we becoming ruled by computer technology?
4. Aren't humans behind every computer, making what appear to be conflicts with machines really conflicts between users and people hidden behind machines?
5. Is cyber war a real or imagined threat?
6. How are we going to create peace, as nations and political entities use the virtual world to make war against their enemies?

Conclusion: In the conclusion of this book, we will return to summarize how philosophical assumptions are embedded in conflict processes, and how certain conflict processes are embedded in philosophy. Also, we will return to the assertion that the theory and practice of conflict processes need philosophical depth. We also make a case for why philosophy needs insights and practices from conflict processes.

Chapter Two: Navigating Identity Differences

Part One: Emotions in Identity Conflicts

Readings:

Cleaver, E., & Geismar, Maxwell. (1967). Soul on Ice (First ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company

"The Conflict Resolver's Paradoxical Identity: From Conflicted to Hybrid" (included below) by Robert Gould

Key Difference and Dilemma of Emotions

Reminder of our Definition of Conflict:

In the simplest terms, conflict is a difference or dilemma that generates strong emotions. What makes a conflict intractable are the walls of emotion that separate individuals, identity groups, and countries. If disputants calmly sit with each other and discuss ways to productively address a conflict, the conflict is transformed from a heated difference and dilemma to a manageable difference or dilemma. The problem is that it is extraordinarily difficult for us to get disputants to sit calmly and discuss their conflict. In many cases, it just seems plain impossible!

Therefore, the difference and dilemma, that occurs about emotions in conflicts, is that we need to separate strong emotions from disputes, but efforts to make this separation can easily undermine the power of the conflict, as well as undermine disputants' principles and group identifications

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Not surprisingly, conflict workers have found that if disputants have already agreed to calmly seek a resolution to their conflicts, before the conflict process begins, then the chances for success are bright. Otherwise, the chances are dismal—unless there is a forced resolution looming, by the courts, or by some other authority. Unfortunately, such forced resolution is usually worse than a negotiated resolution. Furthermore, forced

resolutions rarely address the needs of disputants to access power, embrace difference, and grow as persons and as moral agents.

In the beginning of any negotiation, disputants are likely to have different emotional stories about the conflict at hand. In taking sides in a conflict, disputants build the best case for their side, and express the severity of the conflict through a flood of their emotions, like anger, grief, sorrow, disgust, revenge, outrage, hate, disbelief, etc.

Example to help us work through this dilemma

Early in the history of PSU's Conflict Resolution Graduate Program, we were trying to establish an off-campus home for graduate students to provide community mediation services, under the supervision of our faculty members. We were partnered with existing community mediation services and local criminal justice services. The criminal justice services wanted to save money and time that was currently given to local police to manage small scale neighborhood disputes. They wanted to refer cases to a PSU community clinic with professional staff that was supervised by highly trained academics. I assumed that the community services wanted to help us establish a clinic, as in the early stages of negotiation, they did not seem to be opposed to the idea. However, in the latter stages of the negotiations, they were opposed to the idea, which derailed the whole process and alienated the criminal justice representative, as the process just wasted their time. I was also unhappy that my time was wasted, and I expressed that emotion to a group of community mediation service representatives. They were quite resentful of my sharing this feeling. They said that they saw the process a way that the public sector was trying to take over the private nonprofit mediation services. With that assumption, their lack of transparency earlier in the process seemed like a ploy to undermine the project surreptitiously. My emotions were likely perceived as a power play of my own, though I was sad and frustrated, but not enraged. When people are acting like they are being collaborative, but are actually being competitive, my emotional expression could easily be perceived as a ploy of my own. Bitter feelings amongst all of the participants likely spiked by the end of the negotiation. Expressing emotion did not help; rather, it made everyone more bitter.

In the following, we will discuss and critiques ways to manage this flood of emotions, suggested in the book, *Difficult Conversations*, by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen of the Harvard Negotiation Project.

> "Feelings Matter: They Are Often at the Heart of Difficult Conversations:
>
> Feelings, of course, are part of what makes good relationships so rich and satisfying. Feelings, like passion and pride, silliness and warmth, and even jealousy, disappointment, and anger let us know that we are fully alive." (ibid, p. 85)

Yes, I agree that we should all have the capacity to express a full range of emotions, but the difficulty is how we do this and when we do it. In a dispute the stakes are high when our emotions can so easily escalate the conflict.

In the example shared, above, sharing feelings did not work, it backfired, as it was probably perceived as a manipulative ploy.

> "We Try to Frame Feelings Out of the Problem: The problem is that when feelings are at the heart of what's going on, they are the business at hand and ignoring them is nearly impossible. In many difficult conversations, it is really only at the level of feelings that the problem can be addressed. Framing the feelings out of the conversation is likely to result in outcomes that are unsatisfying for both people. The real problem is not dealt with, and further, emotions have an uncanny knack for finding their way back into the conversation, usually in not very helpful ways." (ibid, p. 86)

I agree with the above, but I would add that we cannot easily focus on feelings, without also focusing on the content of the dispute; just as we cannot focus on the content, without also focusing on the feelings. However, mainstream American society (among others) is not generally comfortable engaging the feelings that drive conflicts because it feels uncomfortable to do so. How do we overcome this reluctance to talk about emotions, or overcome disputant's minimizing their significance? Making matters worse, disputants may want to overdramatize emotions to gain leverage in the dispute. How do we manage these opposing tendencies?
This is a true dilemma that makes its navigation quite difficult. Again, I remind the reader to review the ten strategies that I suggest will help us manage the space between the sides of the dilemma.

In the example, above, it appeared that any expression of feelings was perceived by everyone else in the room as an "overdramatization of emotions." Once a supposed collaborative process is perceived as competitive and adversarial, emotions are perceived as competitive and adversarial.

> "Unexpressed Feelings Can Leak into the Conversation:
>
> Unspoken feelings can color the conversation in a number of ways. They alter you affect and tone of voice. They express themselves through your body language or facial expression. They may take the form of long pauses, or an odd and unexplained detachment. You may become sarcastic, aggressive, impatient, unpredictable, or defensive. Studies show that while few people are good at detecting factual lies, most of us can determine when someone is distorting, manufacturing, or withholding an emotion. That's because, if clogged, your emotion pipes will leak. Indeed, unexpressed feelings can create so much tension that you disengage: you choose not to work with a particular colleague because you have so many unresolved feelings about them, or you become distant from your spouse, children, or friends." (ibid, p. 87)

In some situations, people with unexpressed emotions should probably learn to express their emotions more regularly to avoid outbursts. The conflict facilitator may need to have a private caucus with such a person, where psychotherapy is recommended for such a difficult transformation. However, our mainstream society (and elsewhere) often moralizes that strong emotions should be an expressed only as a last-resort, and usually only within the province of men. Because strong emotions can so easily escalate conflicts, it is often over-controlled in conflict processes. Clearly, the expression of strong emotions in mainstream society is multiply problematic psychologically and sociologically—a hotbed of dilemmas and difficulties that must be managed delicately, not the least of these are that the expression of strong emotions can lead to classist, racist, or sexist stereotyping.

In our example, I, as a white academic man, could easily be perceived as using my emotions to add to the power of my status. The other people in the room were nonacademic women, who certainly, and understandably, did not appreciate my gestures—even though my intention was to transform our process into something more human and collaborative. So much for good intensions!

> "Unexpressed Feelings Can Burst into the Conversation:
>
> > For some of us, the problem is not that we are unable to express our feelings, but that we are unable not to. (my emphasis) We get angry and show it in ways that are embarrassing or destructive." (ibid, p. 89

Some people use anger regularly to try to control and dominate a conflict. These people need to learn how not to do this, though it may have been a successful intimidation tactic. This problem is the misuse of power, as well as the misuse of anger expression. Therefore, the dilemma is how to deconstruct manipulative tactics, as well as adopting a practice of expressing anger in a way that it does not intimidate others. Because power is so often misused in our mainstream culture, and because people in authority often use anger to control others, it is quite a dilemma to change these institutionalized habits. A broader discussion of collegial communication needs to take place throughout the workplace, community organization, neighborhood, and family.

If we construct a continuum between pure collaboration on the one end and pure competition on the other end, we can imagine that most conflict processes happen somewhere in-between, and can vacillate on the continuum depending on the mood of the participants and the topic being discussed. The job of the facilitator is to move the conversation, on the continuum, towards collaboration and away from competition. Good luck doing this, as disputants can easily get locked into their viewpoints and existential realities.

In our example, the process that was organized to be collaborative was actually surreptitiously competitive. Rather deep into the process, a participant accused me of being in league with the "suits downtown," meaning the criminal justice representatives. At that point, I should have asked if the process was just thinly-disguised competition, and should be restructured or abandoned. I labored on, as the criminal justice people got discouraged and left the process. We ended up with a half-hearted, doomed-from-the-start, project, with one graduate student—that died on the vine a short time later.

"Unexpressed Feelings Make It Difficult to Listen:

> The two hardest (and most important) communication tasks in difficult conversations are expressing feelings and listening. A significant pattern we've observed in our coaching involves the sometimes-elusive relationship between the two skills. When people are having a hard time listening, often it is **not** because they don't know how to listen well. It is, paradoxically, because they don't know how to express themselves well. Unexpressed feelings can block the ability to listen. (my emphasis)
>
> Why? Because good listening requires an open and honest curiosity about the other person, and a willingness and ability to keep the spotlight on them. Buried emotions draw the spotlight back to us. Instead of wondering, 'How does what they are saying make sense?' and 'Let me try to learn more,' we have a record playing in our mind that is stuck in the groove of our own feelings: 'I feel so vulnerable right now.' It's hard to hear someone else when we are feeling unheard, even if the reason we feel unheard is that we have chosen not to share. Our listening ability often increases remarkably once we have expressed our own strong feelings." (ibid, p. 89)

Of course, sharing our strong feelings can backfire, escalating the conflict, which can increase our anxiety and, again, prevent us from listening. Therefore, the dilemma can be that both unexpressed feelings, as well as expressed feelings can make it difficult to listen.

In our example, my expressed feelings certainly prevented other participants from listening. Doubtless, my feelings just added to the competitive atmosphere, and probably came across as shaming. I immediately regretted my sharing emotions.

"A Way Out of the Feelings Bind:

> If you are able to share feelings with skill, you can avoid many of the potential costs

> associated with expressing feelings and even reap some unexpected benefits. This is the way out of the feelings bind…First, you need to sort out just what your feelings are: second you need to negotiate with your feelings; and third, you need to share your actual feelings, not attributions or judgments about the other person." (ibid, p. 90)

On the surface this sounds great, but I worry about whether the any disputant should be trusted with their feelings. Is it realistic that disputants will simultaneously abandon their competition-to-win the argument and move to collaborative mode? They might both say they have become noncompetitive, but can we trust that? Disputants can easily use their feelings against each other—either directly, through obvious condescension, or indirectly behind your back: "Disputant X is so overdramatic; can't X talk about the conflict without all that emotion?"

In our example, I should have sensed the potential for competition. It was naïve of me to suppose that we were all committed to collaboration. In a competitive process, emotion is likely to backfire. In competition, it is better to be cool-headed and give your best argument, while sympathetically paraphrasing opponent's arguments. If you give a better argument for the other side than the other side presents, it will be easier to defeat them with a better argument for your side that undermines the better argument that you just supplied your opposition. In the case at hand, I should have validated their fears that our University program might evolve into a public-supported city-wide mediation program that could drive them out of business. To avoid such a fate, I could have suggested that an advisory panel should be created, and composed of community mediation center leadership, so that our graduate student practicum site would be managed nonthreateningly. Hindsight is usually more accurate that what I did at the time. And my proposal might not have been trusted, anyway. The mediation profession tends to be female-centric, and academia, as well as criminal justice, tend to be male-centric—further undermining the trust-level.

"Finding Your Feelings: Learn Where Feelings Hide:

> [W]e often do not know how we feel…This is not because we are dumb, but recognizing feelings is challenging. Feelings are more complex and nuanced than we usually imagine. What's more, feelings are very good at disguising themselves. Feelings we are uncomfortable with disguise themselves as emotions we are better able to handle; bundles of contradictory feelings masquerade as a single emotion; and most important, feelings transform themselves into judgments, accusations, and attributions." (ibid, p. 91)

The authors are, rightly, describing how difficult it is to know how one is feeling, not just how difficult it is to express one's feelings. No wonder we can feel so defeated sharing our feelings, when the likelihood of miscommunicating them is so great! No wonder that social pressured against expressing emotions is so strong. It is easy to understand the urge to "separate emotions from the problem, and then repress them as deeply as possible.

Countering these pressures to keep emotions out of any conflict process means that mainstream society needs to radically change its disposition toward feelings. Appropriately expressing feelings is a challenge in any culture, but in mainstream American culture, it is exponentially more difficult. We are a highly competitive culture, where power, wealth, and status give those who are at the higher rankings more leverage in conflicts, and those down the rankings less leverage. Add to that: the difficulty of managing emotions without accusations of over-playing or under-playing them, and you have a formula for unfair negotiations.

In our example, it ultimately appeared that the community mediation representatives did not want to negotiate anything; they just wanted to shut down the project at hand. When people mislead each other about their intensions, collaborative processes just waste time and resources. Good conflict process facilitators must be vigilant to stop the process, if it is not truly collaborative.

Part Two: The Conflict Resolver's Paradoxical Identity

Readings:

The Conflict Resolver's Paradoxical Identity: From Conflicted to Hybrid by Robert Gould (pre-publication version)

DuMont, R. A., Hastings, Tom H., & Noma, Emiko. (2013). *Conflict transformation : essays on methods of nonviolence*. McFarland & Company, Inc.,

Quote:

> "You are a longitude and a latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of non-subjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a *life* (regardless of its duration)—a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its singularity). Or at least you can have it, you can reach it."

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 162)

Key Difference and Dilemma of Identity Difference

Statistically and culturally, some identity groups are oppressed and some identity groups are privileged. The conflicts between individuals of oppressed groups and individuals from privileged groups must be transformed by giving more power and voice to the individuals from oppressed identity groups and less power and voice to individuals from privileged identity groups.

On the other side of this difference and dilemma, individual persons, throughout all identity groups, differ widely in their experiences, their levels of suffering, and their levels of resilience. Some individuals from oppressed identity groups have had more privileges than individuals from so called privileged identity groups, though this is certainly not the norm.

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Introduction:

Why should conflict facilitators think about identity? Many conflict resolvers are trained to hold and enforce the process, and let the disputants work through the differences that they have with each other. Often, the disputants are encouraged to find common ground amongst their contrasting or conflicting interests. Once this common ground is found, then a resolution or strategy can be developed that helps them work productively together, whether in the workplace, neighborhood, interest group, or home. In all of this work, why is it necessary to examine, or worry about, the identities of the disputants or the process facilitator?

This objection to thinking about identity, within the techniques of conflict facilitation, is reasonable. Consequently, many conflict-process trainings focus on just those techniques, with no need to go deeper. However, I suggest that we can improve our ability to positively facilitate conflicts of many different types, if we examine the different ways that people identify themselves and are identified by others. In the following, make the case for paying attention to identity, and I make some suggestions about how to do that before, during, and after a facilitation session with disputants.

Dilemmas of the Role of Identity in Conflicts:

- Can internalized oppression be overcome or will it always be part of the fabric of human life?
- How much do I choose my identity and how much does my social group determine my identity?

Is internalized oppression curable or inevitable?

Internalized oppression occurs when individuals and social groups internalize the negative imagery and labels that come from one's lifelong exposure to prejudice, negativity, fear, disrespect, stereotyping. For example, the narratives of hate for minority groups can be internalized by members of minority groups (race, gender-fluidity, sexual orientation, transgender, etc.), so that they have an internal voice of self-hate. Therefore, in mainstream society, minority groups are oppressed directly and through internalized oppression—two devils to curse them from the greater society.

Technically, mainstream white people do not experience internalized oppression though they might have self-hate for other reasons (appearance, poverty, ignorance, disability, etc.) Therefore, mainstream white people may suffer from severe forms of psychological self-hate, but they are not victims of internalized oppression.

The distinction between socially-enforced internalized oppression and psychologically-enforced self-

hate is a difficult to be clearly defined because people define minority groups differently, and because those suffering from internalized oppression may also suffer from self-hate.

As conflict facilitators, we must remember that disputants may suffer from internalized oppression and/or self-hate, and this fact may impact the conflict at hand. In preliminary interviews with disputants, we cannot directly bring up internalized oppression and self-hate because disputants are likely to experience questions associated with these two psychological dynamics as too personal. People who suffer these two pathologies can experience them as undermining the positivity of their identities, so we need to be sensitive to any indication that negative identities are playing a role in driving the conflict at hand. If conflict facilitators suspect that internalized oppression and self-hate are aggravating the conflict, then they will need to gently raise a concern that the conflict may involve triggers that are based on identity issues.

How can internalized oppression and self-hate be overcome?

Since self-hate is largely a psychological problem, it can be addressed in psychotherapy and a treatment plan can be recommended to strengthen one's self-image and confidence. On the other hand, the roots of internalized oppression are deeply social, cultural, and economic. People suffering the psychological effects of internalized oppression might find help with the same kind of psychotherapy, as those with self-hate. However, the larger social oppressions and injustices do not go away without radical social change. By some measures, positive social change is happening; however, on other measures, negatives remain—and, sometimes, are getting worse.

Who chooses one's identity: oneself or one's peer group?

Personal Observation: When I wanted to change my identity, I changed by social, work, and neighborhood groups. My new groups reinforced my new identity; however, I still can feel out of place because my old identities are still present in my personality, and reflected in the people from my past.

However, there are people who cannot, or do not, want to change, even if their social group identity is causing conflicts for them?

From these observations, it becomes clear that peer groups can dominate one's identity (on the one end of a continuum) and other people rebel against peer group identity (at the other end of the continuum). Consequently, some people choose their identity and some people let their social group choose their identity. However, in a certain circumstance, like a conflict, it may be difficult to know how much identity plays a role in the dispute because rebels might conform to other rebels, in one context, and rebel from peers in another. To resolve this muddle, a conflict facilitator needs to investigate the role of identity in each particular conflict.

Example #1:

Some Black people identify with their roots in Africa because they take pride in their ancestry and link with the traditions and histories of their ancestors, so for them, the term **African** American emphasizes the word "African." Other Black people identify with the "American," in African **American**. These people identify as being American because they take pride in their American ancestry and their friends, family, and ancestors' traditions and histories, as Americans. Furthermore, some African Americans believe that dark black skin is more beautiful than light black skin. Other African Americans feel that light black skin is more beautiful the dark black skin.

If two African Americans have a conflict; one is dark black, and identifies as African American; the other is light black, and identifies as American; will these differences aggravate the dispute at hand? *Maybe so, and maybe not*. It is not recommended to ask questions about identity during a joint session with disputants, but in preliminary interviews (which I highly recommend), a conflict facilitator should ask about any identity differences, outside of the dispute at hand, that might be enflaming the conflict.

Peer group identities are extraordinarily powerful in personal relationships, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Therefore, conflict facilitators need to be aware of the role that peer group identities play in any particular dispute, where identity differences may be aggravating the conflict.

Example #2:

Some people like to look attractive for other people, in which case, they want some appreciation for their appearance, but **not too much**! Too little attention can signify dissatisfaction about one's appearance and too much attention can be perceived as harassment. Some other people don't care to look attractive; they just want to appear in a way that expresses their identity. Again, these people may not appreciate too little or too much attention paid to their appearance.

As in example #1, peer group identities and personal preferences are quite important in the variety of settings that people travel through. Again, conflict facilitators need to be sensitive to the role that peer group identities and personal preferences play in any particular dispute, where identity differences may be aggravating the conflict.

Getting Stuck in Ones Identity to the Extent of Intolerance for Different Identities

People get unproductively and negatively stuck in their identities when they cannot tolerate different identities. They believe that their identity and personal preferences are better than others. This identity-rigidity will sometimes be the conflict, or at least potentially aggravate a conflict.

Conflict facilitators first need to model empathy and acceptance of difference and diversity. This sort of universal empathy and acceptance seems to require conflict facilitators to positively *identify* with others. To be a good model for empathy and acceptance is to be continually aware of one's tendency to dislike or hate other people. For example, if a conflict facilitator dislikes criminals, or even hates some of them, then it will not be a good fit for that person to work in the field of victim-offender reconciliation or restoration.

The conflict process itself needs to foster empathy and acceptance—to encourage disputants to be able to walk in another's shoes. Asking disputants to paraphrase and validate each other's feelings and experiences within the conflict process is a way to create a climate of empathy and acceptance.

Seeking positive identification of difference and diversity can create inner conflict.

When disputants validate each other's difference and diversity in a conflict, each disputant may internalize the different values and identities present in the conflict, creating an inner conflict (cognitive dissonance). However, this conflict can be resolved by positive *identity hybridization*. Such hybridization positively internalizes the Other, making empathy authentic. The problem with this is that it also complicates one sense of identity. Once hybridized, who am I?

"Who am I?" is one of the most vexing questions we can ask ourselves. Much more mysterious that asking ourselves what we want for breakfast. Well, pretty much all of the big questions are mysterious: Why did I come into existence? What happens when I die? What career should I seek? What talents should I develop? What is the meaning of life? Are people telling me the truth? Who can I really count on? Why is life so stressful? Do I really know those close to me? Are humans fundamentally flawed? Do animals have a sense of humor, and are they laughing at us behind our backs? Other questions about day to day life are much easier to answer. Why are the hard questions so hard? Why all the mysteries?

"Who am I?" gets more complex as the world gets smaller:

Questions about identity haunt us in more complex ways as we are exposed to increasingly diverse cultures and philosophies. Both globalists and nationalists are challenged by the problems of identity. The quest to understand identity started long ago within many different traditions. In the Western philosophical tradition, the notion of "identity" seems to start with the question, "How shall we think

about an object's identity?" The key to an object's identity has been understood as its stability. On some level, it was supposed that every object has an identity that does not fundamentally change.

Plato and the Forms:

Plato thought that this fundamental identity resided in the realm of the Forms. We might think of energy as a fundamental identity. As an example, the capacity of firewood to heat a room is in its potential thermal energy. When that potential is transformed into thermal energy, the energy is transformed from a material state to thermal energy state. In this way, the thermal energy of firewood retains its identity at the level of energy (though firewood and fire seem to be quite different!). The law of conservation of energy seems to reinforce this idea. If we say that the energy of physical objects is their fundamental identity, then that fundamental identity seems stable and is conserved over time. However, we are really only saying that there is one object in the universe that has a fundamental identity and that is energy, if energy can be considered an object at all.

Subatomic Identity:

However, when we investigate energy further, we move to the subatomic arena, where pre-quantum mechanics, physical laws are being challenged, and even the continuity of energy may not be so unproblematic. Most importantly, we may find that, in the case of some objects, their identity may only remain stable for a moment in time and space, hardly reassuring if we are trying to find identity stability.

Our notion of identity becomes even more complicated when we consider animate objects.

Human Identity:

We say that someone's identity can change over time, like when someone changes occupations, religion, nationality, etc.; but does that mean that their fundamental identity has changed? Is there something about a person that never changes? A person's history may remain the same, but that means that one's identity only covers the past—"I was that, then." However, it is often the most dramatically interesting to witness a transformation in a person's identity, going forward in time, like when she is born, marries, dies, or is transformed by a powerful experience. Conflict work is just such an activity where people can be transformed by the powerful experience of identity transformation and hybridization. And for conflict facilitators, there are two potential identity hybridizations: the disputants, and the conflict facilitator herself.

Do indigenous people have a clearer sense of who they are?

Indigenous people, who have not been thoroughly submerged under the cultural domination of "civilized

people," seem to know who they are. They are members of families and communities (tribes, bands, villages). They have gone through rites of passage that confirm at least three kinds of comingled identities: their unique individuality (encoded in their names); their collective identity, shared with family, community, and traditions; and their fundamental identity, as creatures of nature and the earth.

These identities are so stable that the question of "Who am I?" may only arise in their rites of passage, which is designed to provide the answers to this question.

What identity-producing rites of passage remain for those outside of intact indigenous groups?

In the "civilized world," we have generally lost the kinds of rites of passage that define indigenous people. In that void, we struggle to understand who we are. We tend to turn to identity groups, whether that is the family, peers, fellow facilitators, or other identity groupings, focused on race, ethnicity, orientation, interests, politics, or habits. The irony of these identity groups is that, while supporting something that each group member has in common, they tend to deny the parts of individuals that differ from other members of the group. Rather than help individuals find their unique identities, identity groups can submerge the true differences of the individuals involved, and force group members to suppress differences in themselves that challenge the peer identity and groupthink.

Personal Story:

Over the years, I have insisted on asserting my differences, and have, therefore, been subtly and passively excluded from group affiliations over the years. Now, I am content to live on the borderline of many identity groups, never fully embracing a single identity group—and never being fully embraced by any identity group. Other conflict facilitators may find this to be true for them, as well. My somewhat fragmented community is a non-group of diverse friendships, who, if I asked them to be in one room, may find out that the only thing they have in common–is me! And, more importantly, that they are all nice, decent people.

Identity Conflict:

Perhaps the most crucial difference facing humankind is the difference between identities. Privileged identities fight to keep their power. Oppressed identities fight to gain power. Some people mask their real identities because of shame or fears of prejudice, while others create artificial identities to make themselves appear to have more power, status, wealth, and influence than they think they would have if they didn't create these false perceptions. National, ethnic, and revolutionary identities fuel conquest and war. People internalize the identities projected upon them by external cultures, institutions, and the media. These internalized identities can generate internalized oppression or internalized superiority.

These identity differences show up, in varying degrees in almost every imaginable conflict. Therefore, we must learn to recognize identity differences to get a clearer idea of the dynamics between disputants.

The role of identity in collaborative processes:

In typical Western conflict facilitation processes, the identity difference between the mediator/facilitator and the disputants can also create a dynamic that disputants can experience as manipulative. I have been in group discussions where the mediator clearly had an agenda and sided with one faction of the group, at least partly because the mediator was hired by management, and the mediator understood the conflict from the perspective of management. Because someone has hired a mediator/facilitator, the mediator/facilitator has a bias toward her future employment by the hiring body. So, sometimes unconsciously, the mediator/facilitator absorbs the perspective of the hiring body or some other biasing perspective. Even in cases where the mediator/facilitator is a volunteer, there are unconscious biases that can emerge from the mediator/facilitator that disputants need to call out. Only a mediation, that fully empowers disputants to monitor and challenge the mediation, can be called fully collaborative. Again, if a collaborative process is not fully collaborative, it cannot legitimately be called a collaborative process. All participants in a collaborative process need to make sure that it is consistently democratic.

Black and white identity in the 1960s and 1970s:

Eldridge Cleaver, in "Soul on Ice," writes about the identity difference between African Americans and White Euro-Americans. In this first part of his writing, he harshly portrays white people. In the second part of his work, he portrays young white people as potential allies in the struggle for the full liberation of African Americans. By giving both judgmental and compassionate perspectives on white people, he encourages us to navigate between the two, mindful of the negative view, and building on the positive view. This tradition of criticism and alliance continues in social justice work today.

Identity Survival:

I suggest that human beings struggle for survival on many levels. Obviously, we struggle for **physical survival** because of so many threats to our bodies and minds. We also struggle for **identity survival**, where we try to find our true identity—***the real me***—and we struggle to be accepted as a respected person, being our "real me" by the **acceptance of our peers**. We also have our **aspirational identity**, our dream of who we want to be—who we want to be that will be **considered successful by our peers**. All of these struggles for different levels of survival are at play in conflicts.

Dilemma of Paradoxical Identity: If we internalize more than one identity, how do we navigate the conflicts between these identities?

Internal, as well as external, conflict work:

We often think of conflict work as an external process, where conflicts are resolved between people. However, we also know that successful conflict facilitators address their own anxieties that are driven by internal conflicts. This internal work is crucial, so that conflict facilitators can provide a peaceful presence that will ease the stresses of conflict, and also prevent the problem of facilitators projecting inner conflicts upon disputants.

In this section, I propose that conflict facilitators develop a mixed identity, beyond mere exposure to different identities, but internalizing them to the degree that they become part of one's own sensibility. This hybridization process is not meant to replace our fundamental sense of ourselves, our histories, our experiences; rather, it is meant to help us navigate between identities, even help others translate experiences across the gulf of difference.

Bicultural people have the advantage of already being culturally hybridized:

Bicultural people often have the capacity to translate between two cultural identities, so they have an advantage over mono-cultural people (white people in the U.S.), when it comes to conflict work. Of course, bicultural people may have one of their cultural identities subjugated to white culture, so they need to be aware of the way that this subjugation can generate internalized oppression in themselves and the oppressed people they work with.

Cultural Oppression and Internalized Oppression:

An awareness of the connection between cultural oppression and internalized oppression is crucial because those with oppressed identities, who choose to be conflict facilitators, must not hybridize themselves with their oppressors' ideas of who they should be. In the United States, internalized oppression means a degree of self-hate, leading to a rejection of oppressed identities. Consequently, oppressed people are psychologically forced to identify with white culture, being more heteronormative, more fixed-gendered, more able-bodied biased.

White People Hybridization is Different from Oppressed People Hybridization:

The hybridizing of Eurocentric, heteronormative, white people is quite different than for those oppressed by the dominant culture. Conflict facilitators, who have been defined by the terms of oppression, need to affirm and cultivate a thoroughly positive identity, not contaminated by the dynamics of internalized oppression. Hopefully, oppressed people's hybridization is built on the positive experiences that they have had with members of the dominant majority. As a white person, I hope that oppressed people will have more positive experiences with white people!

Deep Empathy:

In addition, I suggest that successful conflict facilitation depends on deep empathy—and such deep empathy requires one to be able to authentically identify with other people—not completely, as that would be impossible—but enough to make a connection. This sort of empathy seems to require conflict facilitators to *identify* with others, and this identification process can create an internal identity conflict. However, this conflict can be resolved by internal *identity hybridization*.

Identity Hybridization:

This hybridization internalizes the Other, making empathy authentic. The problem with this is that it also complicates one sense of identity. Once hybridized, who am I? Uncertainty in how to answer this question can lead one back to a less hybridized sense of self. The aim of this chapter is to help hybridized people feel comfortable in their evolving identity so that they need not retreat to less complex forms of identity that can recreate internal conflicts, and exacerbate distances within the external conflict facilitation process.

Both Singular and Multiple Identities:

My proposed solution is that conflict facilitators think of their identity as both singular and a synthesized multiple. The tension between singular and multiple identities is tragically dramatized by the 2011 mass killing (77 dead) in Norway by someone who believed in preserving a Norwegian ethnic purity at the expense of the most vicious ethnic cleansing. This kind of tension happens, usually much less tragically, throughout the globe and in each of our daily lives, by the way that we manage difference and diversity.

Identity Alternatives for Conflict Facilitators:

In this context, the field of conflict facilitation can proceed in the following five ways

1. Singular Identity: Neutral to disputants; advocate for a neutral process. First, a conflict facilitator can perform the techniques of conflict facilitation, while keeping the conflict at a safe distance, never internalizing the identities of the disputants, and never changing one's professional identity as a conflict facilitator. In this mode, the conflict facilitator does not ask the disputants to identify with other disputants and internalize each other's identities. In other words, the conflict facilitation process is not an experience of transformative empathy; it is merely the crafting of a win-win settlement of a conflict. The problem with this form conflict facilitation is that conflict processes are not culturally neutral; they carry cultural bias.
2. Singular Identity: Neutral to disputants; neutral to resolution or non-resolution. This form of conflict facilitation is not ethically required to achieve resolution. The conflict work is

understood as intrinsically enlightening, not goal directed. The problem with this view is that disputants may be wedded to the goal of resolution, and disappointed if none is achieved.

3. Singular: Neutral to disputants: advocate for power-balancing. This form of conflict facilitation is ethically required to transform human relations to be more equal and power-sharing, liberating us from power-over, oppressive, dynamics. The problem with this process is that disputants may be uncomfortable with the pressure to balance power and resist oppressive authority.
4. Singular Identity: Love and compassion to disputants; expectation of a compassionate resolution. In this form of conflict facilitation, conflict facilitators might adopt a Buddhist perspective, and embody love and compassion in the hopes of being a role model for the disputants. The problem with this form of conflict process is that there is pressure to resolve the conflict, where some conflicts are ill-served by hurrying a resolution.
5. Hybrid: Transformed identification for disputants and facilitators. In this conflict process, the conflict facilitator consciously seeks to internalize the identities of the disputants (being hybridized by them), and seek to be a role model for internalized transformation. I am interested in the third mode of conflict facilitation because I find it to be the most powerfully empathetic, without pressuring a hasty resolution. This form of conflict facilitation is ethically required to help transform and hybridize the identities of both disputants and facilitators, so that ongoing conflicts will be better understood and managed. The problem with this process is that disputants may be uncomfortable with the pressure of transformation and hybridization.

Therefore, conflict facilitators need to decide how much to adapt their processes to the expectations of disputants, and how much of their process needs to conform to their ethical imperatives. This is yet another dilemma for us to navigate.

The distinction between the fourth and fifth approaches to conflict facilitation is a subtle one, deserving more clarification. If I practice love and compassion for another, I might do so in an I-It, rather than an “I-Thou” relationship (Buber, 1970). In the “I-It” relationship, I may be loving and compassionate, but not fully connect to another person by not identifying with her or him. In the “I-Thou” relationship, one’s personal identity melts into the other and is internalized as part of a newly hybridized identity.

To state this simply, one is what one identifies with. At the very least, I am a professor, activist, husband, and outdoorsman. I identify with other professors, activists, husbands, and outdoorsmen. I socialize with them, I read what they write, and I imagine myself being like them. It doesn’t matter which is the cause and which is the effect, there is a crucial, cyclical reinforcement process that consolidates my hybridized identity. Understood this way, we are all hybridized to a certain extent.

Ongoing Hybridization:

However, I'm suggesting that conflict facilitators need to *continually* embrace this process with every conflict that they encounter, thus maximizing their hybridization, their connected empathy, and their success constructively working with conflict. However, I wonder whether this hybridization process creates a conflict around the *stability* of identity; does it make answering the question "Who am I?" unbearably difficult?

Who I am not:

Identity is a timeless question that haunts us in more complex ways, as we are exposed to increasingly diverse global philosophies and cultures because "who I am" is overshadowed by seemingly millions of other identities that I am not. The quest to understand identity started long ago within many different traditions.

This Identity of a Category:

In at least the Western philosophical tradition, "identity" categorizes things that are the same, and also shows how they are different from other categories of things. Europeans are the same as each other, in the sense that they are in the same category, and they are distinct from Africans. Additionally, European/Africans are a category that is different from Canadian/Africans. In these examples, identity is established by an external relationship.

Identity as a Self-Concept:

Identity gets more complicated when it is internalized into a self-concept. In our self-concepts, we might find our inner identity changing over time, or we might struggle to keep it the same in the face of our inner identity conflicts. We can be torn between having to re-categorize our identities and maintaining a singular category of identity.

Stable Universals Create Stable Identities:

Plato thought that the fundamental identity of different things resided in the realm of the Forms (Plato, 1966). In this realm, the Forms are stable universals or categories with continuity over time. What is interesting about this view is that it denies that basic categories might evolve and change. It also assumes that the world fits into tidy categories, rather than being mobile across a wide range of continua. However, what we thought was heroic might be different today than in Plato's time. Even our notion of what it is to be human can evolve and change. On this view, our inner identities can switch categories, and the categories themselves can change.

Ethnic and National Identity as Eternal:

Nationalists might suppose that ethnic and national identity is eternal, but this seems to be rejected by the observation that ethnic and national identities are constantly changing because of changing circumstances and interests. (Said, 1995, p. 332).

What is a Person's Fundamental Identity, When So Much Changes?

We say that someone's identity can change over time, like when someone changes occupations, religion, nationality, etc.; but does that mean that their fundamental identity has changed? Is there something about a person that never changes when physical and psychological states are constantly subject to change? We say that it's the same person who changes, but what makes her the same person? The history of a person may remain the same, but histories are subject to revision and reinterpretation, using different categories of description, and depending on who tells the history. Surely, one's identity is projected into the future as one makes plans and engages challenges. One's identity can be projected into the future. But how do we know that the future won't dramatically change a person? We certainly cannot rely on the person's *name* making her the same person over time because names change. So, where are we to turn to find a person's fundamental identity?

Does One's Soul Stay the Same?

We could say that the soul remains the same, even as the person changes; but where are we to find this soul? There is no empirical basis for it, so it has to be an object of belief. David Hume claimed that personal identity is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." (Hume, 1888, p. 252) I am happy to allow that some people presuppose the existence of the soul to reassure themselves that we have an identity that does not change.

However, there may be a better solution.

We might wonder if we *need* an essential something to justify that someone is the same person over time. Perhaps all we need to do is to have grounds to support the continuity of the person: I recognize her, or she reminds me that I know her. But this requires that she and I to have the capacity to remember this continuity. Amnesia or dementia may diminish this capacity, so how is she the same person?

Another Alternative:

We can argue that she is the same person because persons are such beings that have lifetimes and we understand a person as being the same person over his or her lifetime. A lifetime of person-singularity is

what it is to be a person. So, we can establish what it is to be the same person over a lifetime, but this is from an external perspective.

What is it like to be the same person in one's inner experience?

Our inner experience of identity emerges as we refer to ourselves as a "me" or "I" and reflect on what makes *me* "me." Though we don't stop referring to ourselves as "me" or "I" during our lives, our experience of being "me" or "I" certainly can change over a lifetime. Furthermore, psychological theory suggests that, although we might refer to ourselves as "me" or "I," we do not have a unified self, but rather a framework of multiple selves, as we mature and age.

The Ego and the Alter:

For Baldwin (1897), there are two aspects of the self: the *ego* and the *alter*. The *ego* represents the way one thinks about oneself, and the *alter* represents the way one thinks of others. The various roles that one plays in life, and the various roles that others play in one's life, are internalized into a framework of multiple *egos* and *alters*. Ogilvy (1977) says that our multiplicity of selves function with a decentralized organization. Each self interprets personal experience differently, based on different forms of interpretation. These different intrapersonal selves have different personalities, and our central sense of self is merely a mediator of a vast collection of relatively autonomous selves.

The Master Self:

Ouspensky (1949) suggests that one self becomes a temporary master over the other selves, but this mastery only lasts for less than thirty minutes until a new master takes over, while denying the existence of other selves. Clearly, a hybridized self is a potential product of Ogilvy's mediated self, and the multiplicity-denying, singular self, falls in line with Ouspensky's dominance-shifting self. In other words, both descriptions appear to describe different populations accurately. It seems that identity hybridization may happen quite naturally for people in diverse societies, and perhaps in monocultural societies as well. However, people may be in deep denial of their own hybridization.

Consciously embrace your hybridization:

I am suggesting that conflict facilitators may need to assert and embrace their hybridization, and affirm it as a powerful element of professional empathy, as well as their personal navigation across a culturally diverse world. One of the reasons that people have difficulty acknowledging and embracing hybridization is that we often think of ourselves in terms of a unitary self-concept. This self-concept is a person's self-perception, which is formed by one's experiences and interpretations. However, the unity

of this self-concept is challenged because other people play a strong role in the formation, change, and maintenance of one's self-concept. (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976).

Multifaceted Self-Concept:

Consequently, our self-concept is "multifaceted in that people categorize the vast amount of information they have about themselves and relate these categories to one another." (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). "Self-concept becomes increasingly multi-faceted as the individual moves from infancy to adulthood." (ibid). Sometimes those changes in self-concept can happen quite quickly.

Witnessing the rapid transformation of one's own identity is one of the most dramatically interesting events of one's life, as when one grows up, marries, ages, or is changed by a powerful experience.

Conflict Processes and Identity Hybridization:

Conflict facilitation is a place where people can be transformed by the powerful experience of identity hybridization. For conflict facilitators, there are two potential identity hybridizations: the disputants, and the conflict facilitator herself. The identity hybridization of conflict facilitators can be an important aid to the conflict facilitation process, and as a role model for disputant transformation.

Buddhist Transformation:

Buddhists are particularly interested in transformation as they seek enlightenment, but they tend to believe that selfhood is an impediment to enlightenment. They tend to believe that in the face of universal change, one cannot find peace and stability in one's self. One must reject the permanence of the self in favor of the permanence of background truths that seem to function like Plato's forms, providing stability and balance in the face of the instability and imbalance in our daily experience. In Buddhism, one's identity can be thought of as merely the instantiation of the principles of love and compassion. One takes refuge in the Buddha by embodying the principles that express his enlightenment. To the question of "who am I?" Buddhists can reply that "I" am not anything other than these eternal principles, infinite and everlasting. Not a bad trade-off.

Strongly Identified Buddhists:

Some Buddhists identify themselves as Buddhists and do not call themselves non-Buddhists. In their encounters with non-Buddhists, they do not internalize the other such that they become hybridized Buddhists and non-Buddhists. Rather, the Buddhist strives to become more perfectly or purely Buddhist, especially the devote monk. Even as these Buddhists may reject the self, they do not reject their "higher" principled identification, or their identification as a particular kind of Buddhist.

Buddhists who Minimize their Buddhist Identity:

However, there are other Buddhists who are comfortable identifying as Buddhists and non-Buddhists. They believe that their higher identification with love and compassion is their true identity, and unifies them with every other sort of identity. Therefore, the contradiction between Buddhist and non-Buddhist melts away, as a trivial identity issue.

Conflict facilitators hybridizing identity is similar to the latter kind of Buddhist.

Constantly hybridizing conflict facilitators changes their identity with each conflict they facilitate, or participate in as disputants. Whether the conflict is resolved or exacerbated—or even in non-professional occasions, they encounter another in an identity-transforming way. By doing this, conflict facilitators can indeed hybridize with the non-conflict facilitators within disputes. Conflict facilitators can be both conflict facilitators and non-conflict facilitators, without their identity being undermined. As an example, I am a professional conflict facilitator, but my wife is not; when we have conflicts, I identify with her to the degree that my identity as a conflict facilitator dissolves into our shared identity, as spouses working through a dispute.

Paradox of Singular and Multiple Identity:

This brings us back to an underlying question: If the reader agrees with me that it is desirable to cultivate identity hybridization to facilitate deep empathy, how does one make sense of one's identity as having some kind of unity or singularity? Indeed, in the face of constant hybridization, who am I? When I become someone, who has elements of identities that used to *not be me*, I face the paradox of being both myself, and not myself. This dilemma is heightened by the observation that otherness or *alterity* may have a stronger role in identity formation than ego. (Therborn, 1995, p. 229). The force of others' identities may be stronger than the force of our "me" because we define ourselves in terms of other people's identities more than any created category of our own. This explains two phenomena: First, we can rather easily lose a unique sense of ourselves and be absorbed into the identities of others through imitation and role-internalization. Second, we may feel that we have to fight to maintain a unique sense of self. As Connolly (2002) explains, "Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty." (p. 64). We may need to construct difference and otherness in order to have any kind of identity.

Self-Certainty and the Necessity of Otherness:

From this, the question, "Who am I?" in the face of hybridization becomes even more problematic for conflict facilitators. We do not want to lose ourselves into the identities of the disputants, nor do we want to fight to maintain a fixed sense of our own uniqueness against the identity of others. Conflict

facilitators should not answer the question “Who am I?” by simply asserting one of the following: “I am one of them” or “I am *not* one of them.”

The Singular Identity of our Past Narrative:

The provisional answer to this dilemma is to return to the singular identity of our past. If we need to have some comfort in knowing who we are, we might simply find that comfort in the singular conception of our past identity, combined with the satisfying achievement of adding new elements to our past identity, through the ongoing hybridization process. The recognition of a narrative that encompasses our singular life can grant us the ongoing identity-singularity that we find necessary.

Overcoming identity conflicts, so we can feel comfort in whom we have become:

There is a problem with the above formulation, where I have supposed that we have a singular identity in the past. Does one ever have a singular identity, when we both consciously and unconsciously internalize others into who we are—and we have ongoing inner conflicts between these internalized identities? One might argue that we are cultural hybridizations, whether we intend to be so or not. We might embrace and cherish these hybridizations, or we might reject and hate them. We might love being a hybrid of our role models, loyal friends and supportive family, and hate being hybridized by our detractors and tormenters. The drama of this love and hate becomes the stuff of our dreams and nightmares. If one subscribes to the constant hybridization thesis, the question of “Who am I?” becomes: “How do I resolve these inner conflicts?” and “How can I find comfort and pride in who I have become?”

Acceptance of our past conflicted selves, and the moral achievement of how hybridization expands our humanity.

One approach to this problem is to assert that I have no particular need to specify my identity in singular, non-paradoxical, or even non-hypocritical terms. However, I do have a need to have a baseline of comfort and pride in who I have become. Otherwise, I have an identity crisis, where I am uncomfortable and ashamed about whom I have become. I am glad to have that comfort and pride challenged by identity conflicts because conflict is the basis of the identity hybridization process. However, I do not wish to be disrespected (by self or other) for the long process of my becoming. I trust that my long, ongoing, process of becoming expands my humanity and the common good.

Overcoming Internalized Disrespect:

Key to this position is the problem of internalized disrespect. Long-term or traumatic disrespect can easily be internalized and undermine one’s positive identity, or prevent a positive identity from ever emerging. With this analysis, I am suggesting that the problem of “Who am I?” does not seem to emerge,

unless one's identity is either already conceived as empty or negative: I am nothing or I am inferior, a failure, and a fraud. On the other hand, if one's identity is thought to be positive, then its singularity, multiplicity, or even description, does not need to come up as a driving question in one's life. In the former case, inner conflicts can be threatening and confusing. In the latter case, the hybridization process can be comforting and validating.

Personal Story:

In my case, over my lifetime, I have had numerous identities both positive and negative, but the positive have outweighed the negative, except for a few times of crisis. During those times, as the hybridization process turned from positive to negative, I would ask myself: "Who am I?" or "What have I become?" Only when I was able to reconstruct a positive identity, with the help of family and friends, could I appreciate the positivity of the ongoing hybridization process. The help of family and friends facilitated a deeper hybridization with them. But most importantly, the key was the internalization of their positive regard for me. Unfortunately, not everyone is so lucky.

Singular Identity and Fear of Death:

With these insights, how should we think of the need for a singular identity? I suggest that, in addition to resisting negative hybridization (as explained above); people's need for a singular identity may be generated by their fear of death. First, an eternal soul seems like the kind of singular identity that survives death; this view is common to the Christian and Muslim religions. Buddhists believe that if they identify with the eternal principle of a "ceaseless becoming of the universe," (CBU) they also survive death, but not as a "soul" or "self."

Other religions seem to address the fear of death in ways that require some version of a singular identity. The shared view of these religions seems to be that without a singular identity, it is hard to conceive of what might survive death. On their view, hybridizations, like compound molecules, seem to be destined toward decomposition, just like our bodies. On the other hand, a singularity seems more likely to survive death because it is elemental—and elements, by definition, seem to be eternal, just like the fundamental laws of nature.

Existence is not guaranteed by language:

Our linguistic definitions do not assure us that the object being defined exists, similar to Anselm of Canterbury's ontological argument for the existence of God, definitions do not guarantee existence. Just because we define a soul as a singularity does not contribute the actual existence of a soul. Rather, definitions tell us about the curious structures of language, not the reality that is sometimes being

expressed. In other words, humans' conceptions of reality seem to be more tied to linguistic forms, such as singularity and multiplicity, than direct unmediated experience.

Mystical experience is direct, not mediated by language.

Unmediated mystical experience, on the other hand, defies language almost completely, making it virtually ineffable. If mystical experience is where the answer to our fear of death dwells, then no number of worries about singularities and multiplicities directly address the reality that these concepts are employed to explain.

Cultural Need for Singular Identity:

Singular identities are also culturally generated to secure group bonding and loyalty in families, peer groups, professional groups, communities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, religious groups, and nations, to name a few common categories. Indeed, singular identities are encouraged practically everywhere. On the other hand, hybridized identities seem to be the result of the internalization process that sometimes occurs in diverse societies; however, such hybridizations are also commonly resisted in those same societies. Curiously, cultures push identities in two directions: toward singularity and toward multiplicity–singular by the need to place people into categories, and multiple by the internalization of diverse identities.

Conflict Between Hybridization-Resistance and Hybridization-Advocacy:

What are we to make of the conflict between hybridization resistance and hybridization advocacy? On one hand, hybridization seems to be an observable and measurable empirical phenomenon that seems to play a powerful role in deepening one's empathy and promoting transformative conflict facilitation. On the other hand, people have numerous reasons to resist conceiving of themselves as hybrids, in favor of simple, pure, and singular identities.

The Paradox of Me:

I remind the reader that my recommended way of resolving this conflict is for each of us to be happy with the paradox of both being a "me," pure, simple and singular, along with an impure, complex multiplicity, that is in a continuous hybridizing/synthesizing process. Along these lines, we need to find comfort with what each of us has become, comfortable with both our simplicity and multiplicity. We have no need for a singular identity that explains "me" any better or further than "I am just me." We can be happy to recount our influences, role models, and the diverse social roles that we embody, without further stating the nature of "me." In this way, we don't need to commit ourselves to an identity any more categorical than "me."

Loose Ends:

Disappointingly, my resolution to this conflict is not as tidy as it seems because we might still have worries about death. Secondly, how can our friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors trust us when we are contradictory and paradoxical hybrids? Don't they need to place us in a comfortable category, so they can know who we are and rely on that identity over time?

Returning to Death:

First, let us return to the death problem. What happens to "me" when I die. What happens to the unique being that I have been? What happens to all of my unfulfilled aspirations? What happens to my connections with loved ones? Does all of that disappear when I die? Sure, some people might remember and miss me, but that is not as powerful a loss as what my death means to me. I believe, as Buddhists, in identifying with the "ceaseless becoming of the universe," but that doesn't help me with the losses that occur at my particular life's end. Maybe I have a problem letting go, but I can't help feeling sentimental about my life and my loved ones. I would expect my dog be just as sentimental, so does my dog have a problem letting go? Of course, I feel worse for people younger than I, especially children who die, losing the opportunity to realize many of the ambitions that I have realized as an older adult. To be honest, all of this loss is crushingly depressing. Why do we live only to experience the seemingly complete loss of others, as well as ourselves, and the absence of future experiences doing what we love to do—like writing these words?

A Path Beyond Grief:

From this grief, I wonder if the "ceaseless becoming of the universe" (CBU) needs to be so abstract and impersonal. Perhaps we can be part of the CBU, while retaining, in some mystical way, a personal "path" where we reside in a kindred network of beloved others' "paths." Does such a ceaseless network of kindred paths commit me to a singular identity? Not necessarily; I think it only commits us to similar paths with similar trajectories with loved ones and loved experiences.

Regaining the trust of those around us:

Second, can my friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors trust me when I am such a paradoxical hybrid? If I represent so many viewpoints, might those close to me wonder what I really think? I have had this problem in more ways than I am probably aware. Colleagues in the philosophy department, where I used to work, openly worried about what I *really* thought when I went into conflict facilitation mode. Other people in my life doubtless have the same worries, but are not so confrontational. My response to this worry is to say that identity hybridization is not merely a collection of conflicting positions. Identity hybridization means resolving different perspectives in a reasonably coherent way.

Personal Story:

As an example, my appreciating how conservatives honor tradition, family, loyalty, and industry does not undermine my commitment to strong public institutions, social equity, full employment, nonviolence, and sustainability. My appreciation of heavy metal and rap music is not undermined by my love of jazz and classical music. There is a certain discomfort in being a collection of unresolved and conflicting personality fragments; however, there is an enriched comfort in being a synthesized hybrid of myriad influences. The former should be viewed as a lack of individuation; the latter should be embraced as the best identity for an empathetic conflict facilitator.

Compassion for those who categorize us:

Returning to the problem of other's need to place us within specific categories, we might wonder why they have this need. Such rejection of people with hybridized identities might stem from the *insecurity* of those with an obsession about maintaining their own singular identities. Fighting off the influences that threaten to give us conflicted identities is certainly understandable, so I sympathize with those who have this struggle, and the insecurity that it entails. It seems that only when one is able to resolve one's inner conflicts through hybridization, can one feel comfortable with multiplicity, and the prospect of living with the singular/plural identity paradox.

Support from the fellowship of conflict facilitators:

Given the difficulties that prevent the social validation of those of us who have become cheerfully hybridized as conflict facilitators in every aspect of our lives, I suggest that we seek validation from each other. I am a faculty member of a conflict resolution department, and I have observed that alumni of our graduate program seem to stick with the friends they made while studying with us. My friendship pool is also populated with kindred faculty and alumni. We understand and support each other's hybridization process, even as others often look at us tentatively and skeptically. Logan (1981) and Romanyshyn (1982) assert that one's identity reflects the worldviews that emerge in one's era. As hybridization, through inner transformation, emerges as a worldview in the current era, then more and more identities may be shaped by it. I hope that conflict facilitators can lead the way internally, as they resolve conflicts in the world around us.

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Chapter Three: Navigating Connection/ Disconnection; Full Range of Emotions and Emotional Abuse

Part One: Connection and Disconnection

Readings:

- Clinchy, B. M. (1994). *On Critical Thinking and Connected Knowing*. In Walters, K. (ed.). Re-Thinking Reason: New Perspectives in Critical Thinking (Teacher empowerment and school reform). Albany: State University of New York Press
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and Thou* (W. Kaufman, Trans.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Introduction:

Why should conflict facilitators think about the experiences of connection and disconnection? Many conflict workers are trained to hold and enforce the process, and let the disputants work through the differences that they have with each other. Often, the disputants are encouraged to find common ground amongst their contrasting or conflicting interests. Once this common ground is found, then a resolution or strategy can be developed that helps them work productively together, whether in the workplace, neighborhood, interest group, or home. In all of this work, why is it necessary to examine, or worry about, the connection or disconnection that is occurring within the disputants or the process facilitator?

This objection to thinking about our experiences of connection and disconnection, within the techniques of conflict facilitation, is reasonable. Consequently, many conflict-process trainings focus on just those techniques, with no need to go deeper. However, I suggest that we can improve our ability to positively facilitate conflicts, if we examine the different ways to think connection and disconnection. In the following, I examine the ways that we can experience connection and disconnection, while navigating difference and engaging in conflict. I believe that our knowledge of these ways of experiencing connection and disconnection can help us improve our ability to facilitate conflict processes.

Key Dilemma of Part One: Can connection between people be, paradoxically, both real and an illusion?

The **placebo effect** is when non-medicinal pills are given to patients by a physician who tells them that the pills will help them with their symptoms; and it does exactly that. This shows that a patient's hopeful and positive attitude toward the pill gives it the power to do something that it cannot chemically do.

Therefore, if a connection between people is an illusion, and not real, it may still create the experience of connection. We may have a great difficulty showing that connections are real or illusion, depending on what we count as "real." So, regardless whether connections are real or illusion or both, we can find comfort and importance in the experience of connection.

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

In my experimentation with psychedelic drugs in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I experienced a dramatic connection with other people and the world around us. After the effects of the drugs wore off, I still felt more connected to others and my environment. When I went backpacking by myself, I had "wilderness experience," where I again felt a dramatic connection with others and nature. After these experiences, I further felt that my true self was present when I was deeply amerced in nature, rather than our built-environment.

In philosophical terms, my "existential reality" was reborn, and has stayed with me ever since. However, were my experiences real or illusion? Research claims that many psychedelic experimenters of the hippie era have come to think of those experiences as illusion. However, more current psychedelic research is claiming that these experiences, responsibly generated, can help us achieve more happiness, spiritual growth, and mental health. (See Michael Pollan's *How to Change Your Mind*)

The Notions of Connection and Disconnection are Vague and Confusing:

When do we really connect with another person? Our connection may be illusory or fleeting. We may feel physically, emotionally, culturally, and experientially separate from others, so how close must we be to others to really be connected. One could argue that in a diverse world, such as ours, we may always be disconnected to varying degrees. On this view, one could argue that true connection with others is a comforting impossibility. I agree that even identical twins may feel, to a certain degree, alienated from each other—perhaps because their genetic connection feels a bit claustrophobic. So, too much connection may be as bad as too little.

The Importance of Positive Connection:

It seems that we can easily make the case that in conflict processes, we should find ways to authentically

connect with different others, and to help disputants positively connect with each other. There are myriad reasons why people in mainstream cultures, or in cultures dominated by mainstream beliefs and practices, feel disconnected and have trouble authentically connecting.

The Challenge of a Mainstream Competitive and Individualist Culture and Economy:

To make matters worse, the mainstream competitive and individualistic culture and economy motivates people to pretend to connect with each other. We try to "sell" ourselves to each other, and let others "sell" themselves to us. The goal of this mutual "promotion" is to favorably position the "sellers" in whatever marketplace is being engaged at the moment—the workplace, as well as in social circles. In many cases, socializing outside of work is meant to positively leverage one's business life—and vice versa. With all of these considerations, conflict workers have an uphill climb, or an upstream swim, to authentically connect, or to help others authentically connect.

Navigating Connection and Disconnection:

Reminding the reader that this text is based on the metaphor of navigation, we might—as before—construct a continuum with too much connection at one end, and too little connection on the other end, where we try to navigate between these polarities to get some of our needs met, while trying to meet others' needs, as well. On this view, conflicts and differences emerge in clumps and spasms, so our navigation is needed, along this continuum, in somewhat contradictory ways: providing space between the differing parties, to let them consider the conflict with more resources, and coming together to engage empathetically to understand each other's' experiences, perspectives, values, and ideas.

Finding Authenticity in a Culture of Personas:

Furthermore, conflict workers need to authentically connect with themselves. Often, we have carefully created a persona that we feel will be successful in our social and work interfaces, just as we craft a social media persona that we feel will generate social and career opportunities. To complicate this further, the broader culture has generated personas that are deemed to be attractive socially and in the workplace. So, society generates personas; and we generate personas, that are supposedly geared for success. In this persona marketplace, where is our own unique identity? How do we find it? Who helps us find it? If we cannot find our own unique identity, how can we be authentic conflict workers. Too often conflict workers feel that they have to have a conflict worker persona! We say, "act like a professional!" Should conflict workers wear masks? I think not. Even if it is an equanimity mask or a loving-kindness mask, it is still a mask.

I strongly believe and feel that conflict workers should be authentic people first, and "professionals"

last. With that said, I struggle daily to not be a "professor," to not be a "conflict resolver," but to just be someone positively working on my own and other people's conflicts.

Are We Connected or Disconnected—or Both?

Buber, in the Jewish tradition, and Trudell, in the Native American tradition, write about the experience of being connected to others (Buber) and to the earth (Trudell). However, mainstream Western thinking supposes that humans are radically disconnected from others and the earth. On this latter view, our selves are neurological constructions centered in our brains. These isolated selves receive sensory input as nerve stimulations. These stimulations are interpreted as "others" and "earth." In other words, we do not experience others and the world directly, but indirectly through our neuro-sensory system. This means that the self is radically removed from others and the earth because our experiences are indirect, not direct. Therefore, on the Western mainstream view, we are disconnected, not connected to others and the world.

Mystical Connection:

The evidence for connection is based on a different conception of self and experience. This alternate conception does not limit the self to brain processes, but understands the self and experience to be emergent in a world that is not disconnected from itself. The evidence for connection is in the power of the mystical experience. William James describes mystical experiences as having four similar characteristics, regardless of the context for those experiences. They could be religious, secular, or drug-induced.

Characteristics of Mystical Experience:

First, an experience of mystical connection is *ineffable*, or beyond one's ability to describe in words. There is a sense of grandeur in these experiences that can only be communicated in paradox or symbolism. Second, these experiences are *noetic*, in the sense that they involve a profound insight, a revelatory awareness, an opening of consciousness, an illumination that is beyond the categories of the intellect. One feels unified with the Absolute, gains a sense of immortality, experiences so great a truth that it transcends imagination. Such a truth is beyond the limits of time and space. Third, such experiences are *transitory*; they are fleeting, though they speak of the eternal. Fourth, they place one in a state of *passivity*. One feels swept away by a power much larger than oneself. One feels in a trance of incredibly high awareness.

Shifting Sense of Self and Experience:

When one has a mystical experience, one's notion of both self and experience is forever shifted from the

idea that they are internal to the brain to something much larger: the self is a part of a larger Self, and experience is a part of a larger Experience. For Buber the larger Experience is the "I-Thou" relationship; for Trudell, the larger Experience is Oneness with Earth.

Real or Illusion?

If one has had a mystical experience, one believes in its power and is transformed by it. If one has *not* had a mystical experience, one sees it as an illusion, a psychological aberration. So who is right? One could argue that a mystical experience is simply a part of a spiritual belief, and that mainstream Western view is based on scientific fact: religious belief against secular knowledge. However, it seems to me that both are *beliefs* and neither are *facts*. The Western view that the self and experience is *internal* follows from the *unprovable presupposition* that organic beings are isolated by the inorganic spaces between them, and the *unprovable presupposition* that organic beings are alive with consciousness, and inorganic substances are lifeless, where no awareness can exist. We are isolated because our consciousness is immediately surrounded by unconsciousness. We are only conscious when our nerve endings are capable of sending neurotransmissions to our brains.

Unprovable Presuppositions:

The *unprovable presuppositions* of the Western view are different than the *unprovable presuppositions* of the mystical view, where awareness and consciousness are not merely a polarized on or off—rather awareness and consciousness is on a continuum from the hyperconsciousness of a mystical experience to the lower consciousness of what appears to be lifeless—the earth, air, and water around us.

When two *unprovable presuppositions* are confronted with each other, which one is right? If neither can be proved, then one must be assumed as a starting point for our thinking. Why do the mainstream Western starting points dominate? Why are Eastern views, and many indigenous views, marginalized or ridiculed? When many non-Western starting points lead to more harmonious relationships between people and with nature, why do conflict resolvers in the Western tradition tend to reject non-Western beliefs?

Why Mystical Experience is Important for Conflict Processes:

My conclusion is that people can experience both connection and disconnection. Conflict facilitators want to foster connection is whatever way they can. It seems to me that if conflict workers are committed to creating connections, then we ought to be curious about the most profound connection that people are capable of—the mystical experience.

Further Questions:

1. What does it mean to authentically connect across difference?
2. What is the distinction between connection and disconnection?
3. Is disconnection and alienation becoming a widespread cultural experience in the USA?
4. Do we feel stuck inside our brain and our bodies, unable to reach others?
5. Are individualism and a focus on self-interest at the root of disconnection and alienation?
6. Do we market ourselves to others?
7. Is self-promotion a way of life in the USA?
8. Have we created a persona for ourselves that will help us have friends and a career?
9. Do we have different personas for different interactions?
10. What does it mean to be a professional?
11. Do we have a conflict professional persona, and does that get in the way of conflict work?
12. What does it mean to listen for understanding?
13. What is the interplay of experience, emotions, and thoughts?
14. How do we distinguish between intuition, cognition, emotional intelligence, culture, and transcendence?
15. What does it mean to be working positively with conflict?

Part Two: Anger and Hate

Readings:

Thich Nhat Hanh on Dealing with Anger

“Demonizing the Hater” by Robert Gould

Dilemma of Part Two:

Expressing strong emotions, like anger and hate, is important because one should have a full range of emotions, and emotional communication helps us understand each other; however, expressing strong emotions can be experienced by others as abusive, retraumatizing, and/or a micro-aggression.

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

By Diana Kruzman | The Oregonian/OregonLive

UPDATED July 18, 2019

A Southeast Portland man was found guilty Wednesday of two hate crimes after calling two underage African American boys a racist slur and threatening them with a knife late last year. Michael Amatullo, 61, was charged with menacing, unlawful use of a weapon and second-degree intimidation in the encounter at his apartment complex on Dec. 18. Amatullo’s 7-year-old neighbor was taking out the trash when Amatullo yelled that the child was staring at him, according to court documents.

The boy testified during the three-day trial that Amatullo, who is white, used the racist slur. When the boy’s 15-year-old brother came over, Amatullo shouted the slur at him, too, the brother testified. Amatullo then entered his apartment and came out holding a kitchen knife. The 7-year-old testified that Amatullo stood in his doorway 6 or 7 feet from the boys, saying, “Come here and I’ll kill you.” Amatullo called 911 from his doorway, court documents said, and the boys ran to hide behind a staircase and called 911, as well.

Upon arriving, police took Amatullo into custody, where he launched into a stream of derogatory language and used the slur at least six more times after an officer asked him if he considered himself a racist, according

to a police affidavit. Throughout the three-day trial, Amatullo's court-appointed attorney, Joseph Westover, argued that his client had felt threatened by the 15-year-old. The older boy had said he wanted to beat up Amatullo, Westover said.

Amatullo had been in a dispute with the boys' family over their alleged failure to clean up after their dogs, the lawyer said. "The last statement he said was, 'I'm not gonna get beat up,'" Westover said in closing arguments. "He was saying, 'Why are you arresting me? I was defending myself.'" Amatullo didn't testify but dabbed at his eyes with a tissue while prosecutor Bumjoon Park described him as a racist. Park said Amatullo was looking to pick a fight with the boys and singled them out because of their race, later trying to claim self-defense despite initiating the encounter. Park played a snippet of Amatullo's 911 call, where he can be heard yelling insults at the boys from his doorway.

"He was cloaking himself in victimhood and he has failed miserably," Park said. "He's been exposed for exactly who he is and what he did here." The jury returned nonunanimous guilty verdicts for one count of felony unlawful use of a weapon, which can include carrying or possessing a weapon with the intent to use it to harm someone else as well as actually trying to do so, and two counts of misdemeanor menacing, or creating a "fear of imminent physical injury." Jurors voted 11-1 on the weapons and menacing charges involving the 15-year-old and 10-2 on the menacing charge involving the younger boy. In a 10-2 decision, the jury found Amatullo not guilty of the weapon charge against the 7-year-old.

Amatullo waived his right to a jury trial on misdemeanor second-degree intimidation charges – a hate crime. Multnomah County Circuit Judge Christopher Ramras found him guilty on both of those counts. "This whole event began from the direct aggressive and racially charged language toward a 7-year-old child," Ramras said.

Sentencing was scheduled for Aug. 12. Amatullo faces up to five years in prison for each count of unlawful use of a weapon, while the four misdemeanor convictions each carry up to one-year jail sentences and fines up to $6,250.

CORRECTION: The District Attorney's Office reported that at the time of the crime, the boys were 7 and 15. An earlier version of the story quoted court documents that reported they were 8 and 14. The story also was updated to correct that the jury found Amatullo not guilty of unlawful use of a weapon against the 7-year-old boy.

Questions:

1. *How do with distinguish the terms: anger, outrage, hostility, frustration, contempt, disrespect?*
2. *What is the upside and downside of our emotional suppression bias against potentially disruptive emotions?*
3. *How can we more easily express and manage emotions that tend to escalate conflicts, such*

as:

1. impulsivity;
2. triggered annoyance;
3. cultural triggers;
4. trauma triggers;
5. grumpiness;
6. self-disappointments;
7. loneliness;
8. low self-esteem?

How can we desensitize our emotional triggers?

Everyone has **emotional triggers**, issues or concerns that cause one to get angry, frightened, insecure, or shocked. There are certainly issues or concerns that are anger-worthy, fear-worthy, insecure-worthy, or shock-worthy. However, one might want to **lower one's level of reactivity** to these issues or concerns, so that one can **respond** to them without causing reactivity amongst those who nearby. In order to lower one's level of reactivity, one needs to **desensitize oneself** concerning the issues or concerns that cause reactivity, so that one is not so **deeply triggered**.

There are many ways to desensitize oneself:

- Try to become more of a **neutral observer** to detach oneself from **emotional flooding**;
- Validate the other side of the issue or concern;
- See the other side from the view from compassion, while releasing yourself from your view from judgment. Remember that human beings are both judgmental and compassionate.
- Take a **break** from the conflict;
- Ask yourself if the issue or concern is actually a threat to your person or identity.

Further Questions for Discussion:

- How are emotions used to dominate others?
- How can emotions be abusive?
- How can expressing emotions trigger retraumatization in others?

- How does conflict work frequently engage strong emotions, and what is the best way to help disputants express their emotions, without domination, abuse or retraumatization?
- Do conflict processes have a bias against strong emotions; and how is that problematic?
- Sometimes anger expresses deep hate; how can that be handled in conflict work?
- What is the upside and downside of demonizing the hater?
- Why is there a hate crime bias in our thinking about haters?
- How do we navigate hate, free, true speech?
- How does righteous hate against haters add more hate to the world, and is this always the case?

Analysis of the Dilemma of Strong Emotions:

The dilemma in navigating emotions is that strong negative emotions can be emotionally abusive, while repressing emotions can be mentally and emotionally destructive. It is quite challenging to find a way to express a full range of emotions, while being sensitive to those witnessing this expression, who might have been emotionally abused, or are experiencing retraumatization by being present to the expression of strong emotions. Conflict workers need to both validate disputants' full range of emotion, while watching or listening to the potential stressful reactions of other disputants.

When differences or conflicts trigger strong emotions, it is not surprising that people express anger, outrage, hostility, frustration, contempt, condescension, and disrespect, amongst other feelings. Clearly, these emotions can contribute to the escalation of a conflict, so working with them can be challenging. Validating and understanding disputants who are emotional can certainly be calming. However, too much of this can also be pacifying, when it would be better to accept that the disputant is emotional, and ask if this person is comfortable continuing the collaborative process. We must be mindful that a full range of emotions is healthy, not necessarily a sign of weakness or mental illness. The facilitator of the process must only bring the level of elevation down to the point that all of the participants are comfortable proceeding with the work on the underlying conflict. Again, navigating emotions in conflicts means that the facilitator must regularly check-in with participants to continue to make sure that the comfort level is maintained. In the event that a participant needs to take a break from the process, a short hiatus can be called for everyone. Too often, within collaborative processes, I have noticed that there is a bias against anger and the associated emotions. Calmness should not be forced on people who are comfortable being angry or being around angry people.

Eldridge Cleaver (African American), in his "Soul on Ice," is clearly angry at white people, and expresses it in a variety of emotional ways in the first half of this excerpt. However, in the last

half, he is able to switch gears to affirm how young white people have been sympathetic and have contributed positively to the civil rights movement and have strongly promoted equal rights and equal respect. Cleaver's anger towards white people did not get in the way of expression support white people committed to social and racial justice.

Thich Nhat Hanh (Vietnamese) explains how to manage anger from a Buddhist perspective, but he does not demonize anger or the associated feelings. Rather he is happy to identify with his own anger, and 'take care of it', so that it does not become destructive.

Hatred is a different story. Though the terms, "hate" and "anger" are often interchangeable in ordinary usage, a "hate crime" is usually much more severe than an "anger crime." A hate crime is a combination of criminal activity and hatred toward some oppressed group. I suggest that there is generally a difference between anger and hate because hate is both a deeply felt emotion and a harsh judgment towards an oppressed group. In this sense, the severity of a hate crime is increased because of the belief that certain groups of people 'deserve to be punished.'

Punch a Nazi?

In the following, I suggest that we are on weak moral grounds when we believe that is permissible to punish hater groups in as similar way that they do to oppressed groups. The motto of certain leftist groups to "Punch a Nazi" is an example of demonizing the hater, and wanting them hurt. The moral outrage that these people feel towards white supremacy is certainly understandable, as they are horrified that oppressed people, not only remain oppressed, but are subject to a new round of more frequent hate crimes. Navigating this dilemma is challenging, but the specter of white supremacists provoking violence from anti-white supremacy is keeping more mainstream protesters out of public areas, where they and their children might be subjected to violent spillovers.

Gould Essay: Demonizing the Hater: How Can We Transform Hate without Contributing to It?

- *Better to perish than hate and fear; and twice better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared.* (Nietzsche, 1911, translated by P. V. Colm)

Is it wrong to hate or demonize haters?

This is not merely an abstract concern, but is relevant to those of us who seek to transform the culture of hate into a culture that embraces the richness of diversity. Does our hatred and intolerance of haters inhibit their transformation and contribute to hate in the world? Does hate belong to the full range of emotions that is desirable in a healthy emotional life?

Hatred as Judgment and Hating Haters as Judgment:

I suggest that the key problem with hatred is the element of judgment that gets fixed in an individual's cognitive processes, and institutionalized in culture. The hate of outrage appears to be a healthy response to injustice, but risks the same internalization and institutionalization as the hatred that it opposes.

Transform haters, do not hate them.

The alternative that I suggest is that hate can be effectively transformed by working within the dynamics of identity formation, maintenance, and defense. Dialogue, therapy, mentorship, education, job placement, and reintegration into a community of peers with positive identities seem to be the most effective ways to address those who hate.

Distinction between Anger and Hate:

It is important for my audience to know that I am using a fuzzy distinction between anger and hate. In common use, these terms overlap, so it does not seem to be possible to cleanly divide the two from each other. However, there does seem to be a general sense that hatred is more fixed and subject to ideological justification than anger. Generally speaking, we can get over being angry easier than we can get over our hatreds, and we seem to be able to provide more grounds for our hatred than for our anger. We can get angry because we are grumpy, but our grumpiness rarely spawns hatred. I might get angry if I am served Brussels sprouts by someone who knows that I hate them, but my hatred for them is justified by some unpleasant childhood experiences, where my anger is just a fleeting emotion based on the perceived insensitivity by the one who served me. In the following, I will be supposing that anger can build into hate, and that one who is frequently angry may find it more easily to hate. Later, I will take up this element of *judgment* implied in hatred that seems to be missing in the mere experience of anger.

Personal Story: There is an inherent inadequacy in my reflections on hate.

Though I am attempting to connect with a wide range of experience, I am limited by the fact that, while I have hated and have been hated, I have not hated, nor been hated to the degree that many people have experienced. Furthermore, I have not been close to, nor worked closely with, people who have hated, or been hated, in the extreme. On the other hand, I have not led a sheltered life: My life has been threatened on a few occasions; I have been in dangerous physical fights; I have been in the military and played college football. (For me, football was more violent.) I have worked with gang-affected youth, my father-in-law was a racist, and a friend of mine was a Hell's Angel. However, I will have to trust my audience to fill in the details that are outside of my experience.

Historical Overview of Emotions:

In at least Western philosophy, theology, and science, emotions have been divided into positive and negative polarities: some emotions have been understood as good, some bad. We have inherited this dichotomy from early Christianity. Evagrius Ponticus, 4th century, supposed that *ira* (wrath) was among the eight *evil thoughts*. (Moore, 2010) Later, Spinoza suggested that our emotions could be divided as innervating (stimulating us to activity) and enervating (depressing or "draining" our interest in the world) (Sharp, 2005). From this view, emotions such as anger and hatred, depress our interest in the world and should be avoided as vices. Nietzsche, following Spinoza's division, asserts a connection between hate with war, and overcoming hate with peace: "The so-called armed peace that prevails at present in all countries is a sign of a bellicose disposition that trusts neither itself nor its neighbor, and, partly from hate partly from fear, refuses to lay down its weapons. Better to perish than hate and fear; and twice better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared." (Nietzsche, 2009)

Overcoming the Bifurcation of Emotions:

This division of emotions into good and evil has only recently begun to change within the psychological community. A shift in thinking about emotions has occurred from "earlier portrayals of emotion, which emphasized its disorganizing, irrational, or stressful side" to the "emergent views of emotion [that] underscore its biologically adaptive and psychologically constructive features." (Thompson, 1994)

Hanna and Brown (2004) describe this new thinking about emotions in the following:

> "Self-awareness entails individuals' ability to label their emotions, whether pleasant or unpleasant, and to accept them as part of being human. Self-esteem involves an acceptance of emotions as important information about the self and an ability to act responsibly on those feelings. When individuals are not able to tolerate their fears or anxieties, they develop controlling or addictive behavior intended to numb unpleasant emotional states." (p. 81-82)

Healthy Full Range of Emotions:

This shift toward the view that a full range of emotions is healthy can be seen in the shift in thinking about the emotional numbing that occurs with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Up until recently, victims of PTSD were thought to have emotional numbing across the spectrum of emotions. This does indeed occur in the immediate aftermath of trauma. However, the pattern seems to shift as trauma victims develop PTSD. In PTSD, victims can too easily find themselves engulfed in memories of trauma, which trigger intense negative feelings that are difficult to control, while they continue to have difficulty accessing positive feelings, while they are in the wake of the remembered trauma. However, with appropriate therapy that reduces the "frequency and intensity of re-experiencing states," victims should be able to "fully access their pre-traumatic positive and negative emotional repertoires or capacities."

(Litz & Gray, 2002) In this assessment, emotions are still divided between positive and negative; however, the health of a full range of emotions is also evident.

The Type A Stigma:

Another way that anger and hatred has been stigmatized as negative is through the proliferation of medical literature that has suggested that anger is associated with coronary heart disease (CHD) through the Type A behavior pattern (Friedman & Rosenman, 1959) Type A personalities were described as aggressive, controlling, and impatient, hating both delays and ambivalence. However, this view has been revised significantly though continuous research. Now, the emerging view is that *constructive anger expression* (using anger to resolve conflict) may lower CHD, while *destructive anger justification* (avoiding blame while blaming others) seems to increase the risk of CHD. (Davidson & Mostofsky, 2010)

How Emotions are Constructed:

Complicating our views of emotion is the controversy over how it is constructed. On one side of this debate is the *organismic* account (Freud, Darwin, and James), where emotion is biologically driven as an instinct or impulse, and can only be socially shaped by how the emotion is triggered or expressed, not how it is constructed or experienced.

On the other side of the debate is the *interactive* account (late Freudian, neo-Freudian), where "social influences permeate emotion more insistently, more effectively, and at more theoretically posited junctures." (Hochschild, 1979) While the truth may be that emotion is a composite of biological, psychological, and social factors, depending on the emotion and depending on the circumstance, we might wonder if our feelings are ever simple gut reactions, purely physical, without psychological and cultural layerings. This seems to be especially the case with hatred, where social and rationalizing factors seem to figure so prominently.

Personal Story:

When I feel hatred for boiled Brussels sprouts, is it because of a purely physical gut reaction, or does it have to do with my family environment and my psychological development when they were served to me as a young child? The hatred that I developed seems to stem from what Brussels sprouts *mean* to me, *meant* to my family, and *mean* to the greater culture around us? After a lifetime of hating even the smell of Brussels sprouts cooking, I was given some of this evil vegetable that was quickly stir fried in olive oil at high heat. I loved them! Cooked differently, smelled different, and served in a radically different family and social setting. Full disclosure: I've also tried to desensitize myself from the many things that I have hated, so I was predisposed to stop hating Brussels sprouts. So, the object of my hatred, as well as

the construction of my hatred, emerge from a variety of conceptual, contextual, and experiential factors, and my hatred is *overcome* by another complex set of influences.

Distinction between Anger and Hatred:

One could argue that *anger* might be part of the full range of healthy emotions as experiences to be identifies and shared, but that *hatred*—being more of a judgment—should not necessarily be considered a member of the set of healthy emotions to experience and express. This view follows from the observation that when we get angry, it is often the case that something has *made* us angry—we are reacting with anger. In my experience, anger as my reaction, or the reaction of others, has often revealed powerfully important information about core values that are perceived to be threatened. These experiences have validated my suspicion that anger can be an enormously insightful and useful emotion.

Hate as Intentional:

On the other hand, when we are filled with hatred, we generally find ourselves proactively hating something or someone. In this way, hate tends to be directed at the *object* of our hatred. Again, this is a fuzzy distinction with plenty of exceptions. However, if it holds true in many instances, it follows from the understanding that hate may be generated by ethnocentric cultural influences and/or with hasty reasoning and judgment.

Case Study:

Let's examine two hate crimes from the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa: first, Stephen Biko, a black, anti-apartheid, South African student leader, who was assassinated in 1977; second, Amy Biehl, a white American student who was in South Africa to help end apartheid, and was murdered in 1993. Biko's death in police custody was a hate crime born of the institutionalization of apartheid. Biehl's death occurred at the hands of a group of young black militants, while shouting racial epithets, directed at white people. This was also clearly a hate crime, but interestingly more a product of riotous anger than institutionalized hatred. Amy Biehl's parents forgave her killers after they were granted amnesty by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1997, four years after the murder. In their words (South African Government Information, 1997):

We have the highest respect for your Truth and Reconciliation Commission and process. We recognize that if this process had not been a pre-negotiated condition, your democratic free elections could not possibly have occurred. Therefore, and believing as Amy did in the absolute importance of those democratic elections occurring, we unabashedly support the process which we recognize to be unprecedented in contemporary human history.

At the same time we say to you it's your process, not ours. We cannot, therefore, oppose amnesty if it is granted on the merits. In the truest sense it is for the community of South Africa to forgive its own and this has its basis in traditions of ubuntu and other principles of human dignity. Amnesty is not clearly for Linda and Peter Biehl to grant.

You face a challenging and extraordinarily difficult decision. How do you value a committed life? What value do you place on Amy and her legacy in South Africa? How do you exercise responsibility to the community in granting forgiveness and in the granting of amnesty? How are we preparing prisoners, such as these young men before us, to re-enter the community as a benefit to the community, acknowledging that the vast majority of South Africa's prisoners are under 30 years of age? Acknowledging that the recidivism rate is roughly 95%. So how do we, as friends, link arms and do something?

Institutional and Enculturated Hatred:

From these comments, it is clear that Amy Biehl's parents understood that the victory over apartheid was a victory over a deeply entrenched form of institutional hatred. But their worry was that another form of hatred becomes enculturated within the cognitive processes of impoverished, black youth, unless they are given an opportunity to succeed within the new South African order. So, we can make a distinction between these two hate crimes: the Steven Biko murder was caused by a deeply institutionalized form of hatred, whereas the Amy Biehl murder was a triggered by a form of hatred reacting to the culture of apartheid hate. One might even say that her death was caused by a murderous rage that was part anger, part hatred. To the degree that her presence, near the black militants, made them furiously angry, her death can be distinguished from the beating death of Steven Biko, who was the object of the police's institutional hatred.

Hate of Oppression and Hate of Resistance:

The comparison between these two cases is important because it contrasts hatred, which is deeply institutionalized within the mainstream culture and legal structure of a nation, against a hatred that becomes part of a resisting subculture and part of the immature, cognitive processes of militant youth within that subculture. Clearly, both forms of hate crimes are deadly and tragic; however, the hate of the resistance was in good measure generated by the hate built into the mainstream culture.

Central Question:

So, this brings us to our central question, is it wrong to hate haters when our hate is our outrage against injustice? One way to approach this question is to say that it is completely understandable how institutions develop hateful policies to control large populations under the domination of elites—or

to seek to reinforce traditional prejudices in the face of cultural diversity. It is also completely understandable how liberation movements can easily develop hateful attitudes as part of their overall resistance and pride strategies. Acceptance and understandability, especially in the Buddhist tradition, can lead to a personal peace that quells the fires of hatred, but does not necessarily lead to apathy. One can still struggle against injustice and seek to comfort those who suffer, while finding complete acceptance of evil in the world.

Buddhism on Resistance without Hatred:

This is particularly evident within Buddhism (Ziporyn, 2000), and quite visible within contemporary Engaged Buddhism. Ziporyn explains that, within Tiantiai Buddhist thought, "the only way to handle ineradicable evil and suffering is to involve ourselves in it, by accepting it and adding additional elements that recontextualize and transform it." (Loy, 2004)

Justification for Hating Haters:

Another approach is to make a judgment that resistance hatred is better (or more excusable) than domination hatred. This would mean that it is acceptable to hate haters, as long as the haters hated are the dominators and the hating of haters is part of the resistance to that domination. However, this formula doesn't diminish the violence that hating haters can unleash on the world. So, it is hard to use terms like "better," "excusable," or "acceptable" with much moral force to describe hateful, violent militants.

Liberation Movements Split between Violence and Nonviolence:

We might prefer that militants be angry and nonviolent, rather than hateful and violent, but militant movements often are split between the two strategies. So, even nonviolent activists are put in the position of tolerating the hate and violence of liberation movements because of the justice being sought. But does their toleration undermine the transformational power of nonviolence? This answer to this question may hinge on how the mainstream media frame the conflicting sides of the same protest. Currently, in the United States, we have nonviolent and violent demonstrations against white supremacist racism. Often the media sensationalize violence, so the image of anti-hate becomes more violent. This media sensationalism, during the 1960s and 1970s let to the creation of underground, activist media to inform people of the transformative power of nonviolence. Now, we have electronic media that seeks the same end.

Hypocrisy of Privileged People Hating Haters:

Turning to another example, we might wonder if it is acceptable for those within American mainstream society to hate the hatred expressed by racist subcultures. The first problem with this is that mainstream

American society retains a significant element of racism, institutionalized within it. This racism is not always visible to the mainstream population who have not experienced the brunt of it, as opposed to the minority populations that it targets. On this view, the hatred expressed by white supremacist subcultures is merely an exaggeration of the racism implicit within mainstream society. So, it is somewhat hypocritical for us to hate the other haters, when we are members of a society that accepts the normalcy of its own institutionalized hatred.

Adding to the Amount of Hate in the World:

The second problem with our hating haters is that we are adding to the amount of hate in the world, potentially hardening that hate within our cognitive processes, becoming motivated by hate, becoming routinely hateful, and contributing to an upward spiral of hate that ensnarls both the hater and hated into an ever-increasing drama of hate and violence—institutionalization and internalization. Furthermore, current research is suggesting that people who feel angry most of the time prefer to maintain this trait. (Schwartz, 2011) Though anxiety management training may be successful for anger reduction, not everyone can access—or wants to access—this training. (Deffenbacher, Demm, & Brandon, 1986)

Anger and Hate as a Personality Trait:

Since anger can be a persistent personality trait, we should not be surprised that hatred can also be a persistent personality trait. Furthermore, those with such persistent personality traits can easily see the objects of their anger and hatred as persistently hateful beings—demons who personify evil. Therefore, it is not surprising that white supremacists have a whole pantheon of evil to hate: most, if not all, minorities, and those who support them. It is also equally unsurprising that those who oppose white supremacy can also demonize them as ugly racists. Given that we all can be victims of our habits, these hatred-habits are hard to abandon, even as they may contribute little to change. Is there another alternative?

An Alternative to Hating the Hater:

I suggest that we work within the dynamics of identity formation, maintenance, and defense to transform hate. Negative identities are developed around the premise that “I am not that!” The Other is seen as inhuman, immoral, and a threat. Positive identities are developed around the premise that “I am different, but include and am included by the Other.” Nationalist identities can be either (and sometimes both) positive and negative. Extreme negative nationalist identities tend to be warlike because they need to scapegoat or eliminate other identities. Negative identities can be maintained in a population by reminding them of the way that Others are a threat. Positive identities are formed and maintained in cultures that promote and positively experience diversity. Positive cultures resist stereotyping outsiders. Individuals with negative identities can be welcomed into cultures with positive identities in the hopes

of transforming negative identities into positive. This transformation requires careful education and mentorship through building positive relationships with diverse people.

Negative Identities Reinforced by Transient Communities and Electronic Echo Chambers:

The fundamental problem in transforming negative identities into positive is when the negative identity is backed up by a deeply held religious or political orientation. Though mainstream religions, social, and political organizations have some negative identities built into their belief systems, these systems also contain a certain degree of positive identification. This leaves marginal religious sects, and social and political groups, where negative identities are fundamental to their identity. Reaching people in these groups is problematic in contemporary American society, where community members are so transient and identity group beliefs are reinforced by electronic echo chambers.

Creating Opportunities for Dialogue:

To address these negative identity ideologies, we can the opportunity for dialogue, where people with similar religious, social, or political views—but with positive identities—discuss their alternative orientation. If such talks fail, or fail to occur, another tactic is to tit-for-tat negotiations (Axelrod, 1984), which motivates cooperation through positive reinforcement and discourages noncooperation through negative reinforcement. This negotiation strategy is effective in quite adversarial circumstances. It appears to be a viable strategy to motivate hate groups to cooperate with peer groups who have positive identities. It certainly seems to be more effective than punishment, which simply reinforces negative identities. However, there must be some underlying motivation for negative identity groups to meet with positive identity groups. As an example, Antifa, the anti-white supremacist group appears to be populated with people from similar working class heritages as the white supremacist group. Common ground may be achieved, if the **wealth gap** is the topic of conversation.

Therapeutic Intervention:

Childhood attachment disorders, and other developmental issues, can create rigid senses of self that resist positive identities. Therapy might benefit people in this group, but it might need to be motivated by another kind of tit-for-tat negotiation. Others with negative identities might have flexible senses of self that can adapt to new circumstances and a more diverse set of peers. Governmental pressure may be needed to encourage such transformation, but economic opportunities must also be part of the equation.

Clearly, hate crimes need punishment to send a strong message of their unacceptability. However, it is ironic that **prison social structure often replicates and encourages the hate group divisions** found on the outside. It seems that hate criminals need to get back into the community of positively-identified peers, while being prevented from rejoining hate groups. New peers need to share many values with hate

felons, except that these new peers have positive identities. As an example, if hate crimes are done by a white supremacist street youth, after prison, they could be trained, and then placed in a job with other former street youth, who have either given up their white supremacist ideology, or never had it in the first place. In my view, mentorships, as well as educational and employment opportunities, are the key to effective transformations from negative to positive identities. Failure to do these things, effectively, will doom us to a future of hateful rhetoric, behavior, and criminality.

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Chapter Four: Navigating Disengaged and Engaged Thinking and Heidegger's Meditative Thinking

Part One: Disengaged and Engaged Thinking

Readings Included in the Chapter:

"Engaged Thinking for Conflict Processes" by Robert Gould

"Engaged Writing: Mediating Inner and Outer Narratives by Robert Gould

Introduction:

Why should conflict facilitators think about their thinking? Many conflict workers are trained to hold and enforce the process, and let the disputants work through the differences that they have with each other. Often, the disputants are encouraged to find common ground amongst their contrasting or conflicting interests. Once this common ground is found, then a resolution or strategy can be developed that helps them work productively together, whether in the workplace, neighborhood, interest group, or home. In all of this work, why is it necessary to examine, or worry about, the kind of thinking that is occurring within the disputants or the process facilitator?

This objection to thinking about our thinking, within the techniques of conflict facilitation, is reasonable. Consequently, many conflict-process trainings focus on just those techniques, with no need to go deeper. However, I suggest that we can improve our ability to positively facilitate conflicts of many different types, if we examine the different ways to think about thinking. In the following, I examine groupthink, critical thinking, contextual thinking, continuum thinking, engaged thinking, and meditative thinking because I believe that our knowledge of these ways of thinking can help us improve our ability to facilitate conflict processes.

Types of Thinking:

Groupthink: Thinking like the group thinks, without thinking for oneself.

Critical Thinking: Thinking for oneself to avoid groupthink.

Engaged Thinking: Thinking together, while also thinking for oneself.

Contextual Thinking: Being mindful of the context of our thinking and the thinking of others.

Continuum Thinking: Avoid thinking in polarities by thinking along continua.

Meditative Thinking: Following Heidegger's advice to:

— Meditate on the notion of "releasement from things."

— Maintain an "openness to the mystery."

— Get comfortable with paradox, "what at first sight does not go together at all."

Key Dilemma of Part One: Is it possible to genuinely think together with others, or is the perception of connected thinking just an illusion or a coincidence?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

Once in a while, I participate in a brainstorming process with colleagues, where the ground rule is that we will just share ideas, without judging them. This collaborative process is intended to generate fresh perspectives on a problem and fresh solutions to consider. I have often wondered if brainstorming is really an example of "collectively thinking together," or whether participants share their individual critical thinking, hoping that their perspective or solution is the best. It might appear to be a collaborative process, but inside each of our minds, we still might be competing with each other. To be an authentic collaborative process, each participant needs to think that all of the other participant's perspectives and solutions are as good as mine, maybe better. Is this ever the case?

Engaged Thinking for Conflict Processes:

1. How do different kinds of thinking help or hinder the process of navigating difference and dilemma?

This chapter addresses how our thinking can get in the way of navigating difference and dilemma. If we are disengaged from other peoples' differences, we cannot fully connect with them. We must be able to

connect and engage with these differences, and not deny or overlook them. It is a fantasy that everyone is, or should be, the same as us. Even identical twins have differences in how they internalize the cultures around them. We may meet someone who appears to be our "soul mate," but we eventually find out that they are not really identical with us. We have both similarities and differences with everyone, and they must both be engaged, or we will not fully connect with each other.

2. How do logical and critical thinking help us overcome groupthink, but still pose a hindrance to the process of navigating difference?

In addition to the problems of connection and disconnection, explored in the previous chapter, we need to explore the limits of logical and critical thinking or thinking for oneself. Logical thinking is important in areas of thought, where one can draw a straight line between premises, assumptions, and causes to conclusions, implications, and effects. However, much of our thinking is not quite so linear! (and the world itself is often non-linear and multi-causal).

We often find ourselves thinking within narratives, narrative structures, specific contexts, with rather fixed mindsets and frames of reference. These overarching influences on our thinking are hard to isolate, so that they could be put into a logical formula. Sometimes, we are completely unaware of these overarching influences because they can be so deeply embedded in our cultures and subcultures.

Critical thinking is an important skill because it points to the sometimes-distracting influences on our thinking, like fallacies, unwarranted assumptions, rhetorical ploys, irresponsible skepticism, peer group conformity, and exposure to specific audiences or groups.

In our mainstream culture, we almost inevitably learn to think like the members of our identity group. This **groupthink** is dangerous because it can force group members to ignore their own individual experiences, emotions, and thoughts, in favor of the ideology of one's group. It is not easy to escape one's own groupthink.

Personal Story: As a professional academic, I know that I can fall into groupthink myself. My philosopher colleagues have impressed on me the view that other academics, from other disciplines, often have inferior views and flawed research. In addition to this, I have been trained to think that students can easily become distracted by their social lives, occasionally cheat on their tests and homework, and at times, try to charm teachers into giving them good grades. I need to make an ongoing effort to avoid being influenced by this academic groupthink, and treat each colleague and student with respect and an open mind.

3. Why does the field of informal logic have an obsession with fallacies as irrational, when they can often be reasonable?

In my experience, when fallacies are defined in a certain way, they can certainly point out common thinking mistakes, but they can also be accurate.

For example, amongst all of the fallacies within informal logic, the *ad hominem* fallacy is typical in its limitations. Whereas, it accurately describes the problem of criticizing the person giving a viewpoint, rather than criticizing the viewpoint itself, it seems to ignore that the person's identity may, correctly, play a role in forming their viewpoint.

Case Study: Editorial: "Look to Past Cougar Management to Help" by Jim Akenson

The Oregonian, January 25, 2019

"The fatal cougar attack on a hiker in the Mount Hood National Forest last year was a tragic thing. Evidence indicated that the cougar was a female that was in good health. Is this a surprise? Not really.

Cougar populations are at all-time highs across Oregon. Experts currently estimate a population of about 6,400 cougars compared to an estimate of less than 3,000 in the mid-1990s. Some reasons for the expansion are biological, some are social and much is connected to management capabilities and practices. We need to find a way to return to this socio-biological balance, and looking to the recent past might just be the best bet: Back to when hunting with hounds was a legal and effective management tool in Oregon.

The effects of this population growth are alarming and lead to other changes. Prey animals, specifically deer, relocate to more areas developed by humans to avoid risk, drawing in more cougars searching for the next meal.

Hunters and state wildlife managers report that deer are now less abundant in the mountain, high desert and canyon regions of our state. Meanwhile, Oregon cities are wrestling with the number of deer inhabiting city limits, and cougars are showing up in backyards and schoolyards.

As cougars become more comfortable in human-altered landscapes, the chance of negative encounters with humans, as well as pets and livestock, increases.

So, what is the solution? More intensive cougar management through various hunting techniques.

According to the 2017 Oregon Cougar Management Plan, the success rate for 2016 cougar hunters was 1.9 percent, with 13,879 people reporting they had hunted cougars. Contrast that with 1994 data — the last year dogs were allowed in conservatively controlled, limited-entry cougar hunting. Those figures showed that 358 people hunted cougars and harvested 144 for a success rate of 40.2 percent.

The bottom line is that hunting with dogs is more efficient and provides wildlife managers a reliable tool for maintaining the cougar population within their objectives.

Oregon's cougar management and record-keeping are divided into six zones, each assigned a desired harvest quota to keep the population in balance. Employing the current limited management methods, only one of the six zones has met the harvest quota in recent years.

A criterion for quota establishment is the frequency of complaints. By far, the most cougar complaints are recorded on the west side of the Cascades, where the bulk of Oregonians live. More than 350 cougar complaints per year were received during the last decade in two zones in that area. Unfortunately, this recording system was not initiated until 2001, so we don't have data for the time before the dog ban of 1994.

We do have records for administrative actions connected to human safety and pet conflicts before and after the dog ban of 1994. For eight years before the ban, they averaged four per year. Seven years after the dog ban, complaints increased nearly seven-fold to 27 per year.

Oregon does have a program wherein highly vetted "houndsmen" are permitted to lethally remove cats to reduce human conflict and bolster deer and elk survival. These agents work closely with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists. Even with this program in place, cougars are steadily increasing in Oregon, where hunting them is very impractical without the aid of dogs.

Currently, the law authorizing the agents is up for renewal, and hopefully it will receive legislative support and be applied more broadly to reach zone harvest quotas and to help curb cougars' increasing population across the state."

This editorial seems reasonable, but it leaves out some information.

Missing Information: The Mountain Lion Foundation and other groups counter Akenson's view with the following concerns:
Hunting dogs can gravely terrorize cougars and their young, injuring them, and leaving them cornered or run off from their territory. Hunting dogs can injure or kill other wildlife, and even injure or kill each other, or even strangers who get in their way. These animals are bred to kill without mercy. Trained cougar hunters kill with efficiency and mercy. Consequently, it is inhumane for dogs to be used in hunting cougars, and it is much more humane for trained and certified hunters to cull any overpopulation of cougars, which has been the given practice in Oregon since 1994.

Analysis: There is certainly room for a debate on this topic, but readers need to have complete information. Given that "*Jim Akenson is a wildlife biologist and conservation director for the Oregon Hunters Association. Akenson is also a book author and has invested much of his career in researching the Northwest's predators. He lives in Enterprise [Oregon],"* we might suspect that he would be sympathetic to the idea of hunting cougars with hunting dogs. We could suspect this, without reading his article, by simply knowing his affiliation with hunters. Making this assumption, without reading his editorial, would be an ad homonym attack on his viewpoint. However, in reading his editorial, we find

that he does not respond to the longstanding criticisms of hunting cougars with dogs. Therefore, it seems that his affiliation with fellow hunters is driving his viewpoint. My point is that identity often plays a strong role in what we believe to be true, and in how we present our views to others. Sometimes, we employ ad homonym dismissals of arguments that simply trigger our contrary beliefs. Other times, we properly take identity into our consideration of our own and others' views.

Informal and Formal Logic: The field of informal logic can be as true/false oriented, as the field of formal logic. These fields of philosophy want to convince us that fallacies are false, just as groupthink is false, but there can be some truth embedded in both. Oddly, the fields of logic and critical thinking can, at times, themselves, be examples of groupthink.

Like all overgeneralizations and stereotypes, there is some truth to groupthink conclusions, but most damaging, these overgeneralizations can have a vitality of their own, and professors struggle to get out of the grips of these group thoughts, largely because they can serve as self-congratulations to the professors, themselves. "We are the smart ones doing the important work. Other professors are not as smart, and their work is not as good. Students just want earn degrees by doing the least work."

Likewise, students have similar groupthink perceptions about other students and professors. It is a quite challenging to avoid jumping to conclusions about students and professors because it takes so little time out of one's day! To really get to know students and professors, who think differently than our identity group, takes a lot of time that most of us do not have at our disposal. Therefore, these group-thoughts can live on for generations, until some serious research has the power to challenge them. The challenge here is to learn to think for oneself, and resist letting our identity group do our thinking for us.

4. What is engaged thinking, and how does it help us navigate engagement and disengagement?

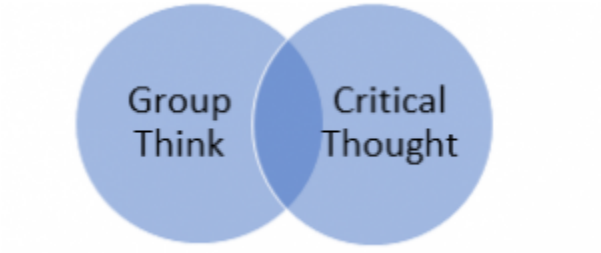
Since there is a problem with critical thinking, in isolation of a true diversity of thoughts, we need to come up with a way to overcome this problem. As explained above, critical thinking is needed to resist the conformity of group-thinking, generated by our identity group, assuming that one's identity group is not diverse in its thinking. One's identity group can have cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, and still have groupthink, if thinking differently about core features of identity is not tolerated.

On the other hand, an identity group that is truly diverse in terms of gender identification, race, sexual orientation, wealth, status, etc. can offer many perspectives to help broaden our thinking. One who is a critical thinker does not have the capacity to know these other perspectives, unless one engages with these diverse others, and listens to their experiences, thoughts, and begins to understand where they came from, and empathize to some degree with their viewpoints.

I call this engagement by the name, **engaged thinking**. Blythe McVicker Clinchy calls it "**connected**

knowing." I have illustrated the connection between group-thinking and critical thinking, below. Remember that the engaged thinking, that the arrow points to, is when group members are critical thinkers, who are also committed to thinking together across their differences.

Also, remember that research-based groupthink is the fabric of knowledge, going forward. However, research can be proven wrong, so one must always have a skeptical eye on the received knowledge of any cultural history, particularly one's own. On the other hand, we also need to navigate between our skeptical eye and our eye of compassion to be sure that we give others our empathy and understanding, even when we don't agree with them.



The overlapping section of the Venn diagram circles, above, represents **engaged thinking**, where we can think together with others, without sliding into groupthink, nor sliding into a kind of individual thinking that discounts the value of other's thoughts.

SUMMARY OF GROUP THINK, CRITICAL THINKING, AND ENGAGED THINKING*Groupthink*: Thinking like the group thinks, without thinking for oneself.

Critical Thinking: Thinking for oneself to avoid groupthink.

Engaged Thinking: Thinking together, while also thinking for oneself.

5. How does engaged writing help us with engaged thinking?

Engaged writing is an internalization of the process of engaged thinking. Rather than think with others, engaged writers engage across their internal differences, critiquing their own group think, along with critiquing the isolation of their own internal critical thinking.

6. What is contextual thinking?

If we use the metaphor of a **map and territory**, then the world of direct experience is the **territory** or **context,** and our abstractions and generalizations of that world are the **map**. In the following, I share an example of the contrast between a map and the territory:

On a recent camping trip, at a lake north of Mt. Hood, I talked with the camp host, who was contracted by the forest service to verify their map, created the year before. I was assuming that the map would be accurate, as it was so new. However, the camp host pointed to a number of spots on the map that were wrong: "no road here; no trail here; no creek here, etc." The map needed be corrected by the camp host's direct experience of the territory, so that the map could properly guide us through the territory.

Contextual thinking is based on our direct experience of the phenomena that have been abstracted and generalized in our language and research. The abstractions and generalizations are supposed to guide our lives, but they must correspond with our direct experiences. Otherwise, we will be misled. In other words, we live in a non-reducible world, that cannot be fully experienced through indirect abstractions and generalizations. We need the maps to guide us, but maps are always somewhat incomplete and inaccurate, so they must continually be updated and verified by our direct experiences.

In psychology, we learn about various mental disorders, so that we can diagnose and treat patients and clients with these disorders. However, it becomes a little too easy to see the patient or client in terms of their disorder ("He is a manic-depressive."), not as a person who struggles with a certain issue at a certain time ("At this time, he is struggling with manic-depressive episodes". In other words, we don't want to map his territory in a fixed, inflexible way. We want his changing experience to change how we think about him, so that he is not stuck in a label. As the territory changes, the map needs to change.

In public health, before the book, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, was published in 1976, women's bodies were considered to just be a variant of men's bodies. Physicians' diagnostic maps saw the body of a women as the same general body as men, with some variations. However, paradigm-breaking research, and the direct experience of women, showed that the map of a woman's body should be different than the map of a man's body.

What is more true, direct experience or our concepts?

Analytic philosophers seem to think that some of our concepts can be shown to be true, and other concepts, derived from the true ones, can be indirectly true. On the other hand, existential philosophers seem to think that our direct experiences are true, and that our concepts need to follow the lead of our experiences.

In my opinion, contextual thinking can best approximate the truth of the matter, when it balances insights from maps with insights from direct experience. Ultimately, the truth of the matter must be judged by its coherence and consequences. On my view, contextual thinking provides an important mode of reflection, but other modes, like mystical experiences and revelations are important, as well. We best understand the world when we maximize the modes of understanding and experience that we use in our daily navigations of thought and action.

7. How does contextual thinking get us unstuck from abstract thinking, oversimplifications, and overgeneralizations?

Contextual thinking provides an alternative perspective on our world that is not over-controlled by our concepts and abstractions. Sometimes abstractions can be useful, sometimes not. Sometimes context can be useful, sometimes not. It would not be useful to get stuck in either mode, without the other mode. Getting unstuck requires developing the skills of each kind of thinking, so one can navigate with both. One needs to see both the forest and the trees, not just the forest without the trees, nor the trees without the forest.

8. What is ordinary language thinking, and how does it help us escape the confines of jargon and unnecessary abstraction?

Ordinary language thinking is a mode of thinking that avoids philosophical or academic jargon, and uses language that ordinary people use to communicate. These ordinary ways of communication may offer insights about life, and the world, that are missed by abstractions that may be academic jargon or that can overgeneralize aspects of life and world.

9. What is continuum thinking, and how does it get us unstuck from polar thinking?

In English and other languages, we have many polarized categories: good/bad; happy/sad; beautiful/ugly; strong/weak; leaders/followers; dominant/dominated; correct/incorrect; and on and on.

However, there are many gradations between these polarities that form continua. If we learn to avoid polarized thinking that is filled with polar opposites, then we are using continuum thinking. In our work with conflict, it is much better to be continuum thinkers, and encourage continuum thinking amongst disputants. This shift from polar thinking to continuum thinking creates a space for understanding and navigating differences, without triggering our limbic systems into emotional flooding.

10. What is paradoxical thinking, and how can thinking opposites at once help us overcome cognitive dissonance?

Cognitive dissonance is the uncomfortable feeling of experiencing internal, irreconcilable, differences.

As an example, we may care deeply for a family member that we have a hard time being around because of past resentments, and the inability of forgiveness to heal these grudges. So, internally, we are both pulled toward a certain family member, while also feeling pushed away. Managing cognitive dissonance commonly pushes us toward one side of the difference, and away from the other side. We might avoid the person as much as possible, or we might continue to try to build bridges with them more regularly.

Paradoxical thinking is achieved when we develop the ability to **think opposites at once**. Rather than default to one side, or the other, we can find a way to navigate the tension between the two opposing experiences. In the example, above, we acknowledge that we are both pulled toward and repelled by a family member, so we act in such a way to achieve civility in our relationship with that person, while protecting ourselves from being toxified by overexposure to them.

11. What is flexible thinking, and how does it help us navigate between liquid and solid knowledge?

Solid knowledge is the kind of bedrock knowledge that seems to be unchangeable. The sun rises and sets as the earth rotates. Other bits of knowledge are not so stable, such as the recommendation that breathing calmly is generally a good idea—except when it isn't. Bedrock knowledge is referred to a solid knowledge. A lot of academic effort goes into finding solid knowledge. Sometimes, people propose certain bits of knowledge, like "the industrial/technological age has been a great idea for the people and the planet." Well, yes and no, depending on your view of "good."

The technology advancements in public health have generally been positive. However, coal mining and pollution has been big negatives for the environment. This kind of claim is referred to as **liquid knowledge** that is true or false, depending on the context. We need to use **flexible thinking** to navigate the goodness and badness of the industrial/technological age. Claiming that this age is all good, or all bad, is an example of **inflexible thinking,** which can be misguided and dogmatic.

12. How can we mediate between inner and outer narratives?

When we reflect on our lives, we often construct **inner narratives**, or stories, about how our life has been developing. These life stories are both personal and social. Personal because we invent them, and social because the **outer narratives,** that surround us, also influence our inner narratives. The problem of navigating the inner and outer narratives is that sometimes the outer narratives are too harsh on us, or sometimes they build us up beyond justification. Likewise, sometimes our inner narratives are two harsh on us, or exaggerated our worth, talent, or virtues beyond reason.

Navigating our inner and outer narratives can be difficult because there is no **objective narrative to**

guide us. How do we measure our success? How do we measure our failure? In the absence of an objective story of our life, I recommend consulting those who care about us, and also those who are likely to have different perspectives. Meshing these stories can help create a balance of our sense of success and failure. A helpful (but often misattributed) saying suggests that, "success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm."

13. Besides our thinking and talking to each other, how do other expressions of self, culture, environment, genetics, narrative, and group dynamics help or hinder the process of navigating difference?

The various ways that people communicate within themselves (thought and mood) and others (talk and affect) include various kinds of art, music, marketing, media, and the patterns of peer, family, neighborhood, and workplace interactions. Each of these influences how we think or react to each other. Navigating all of these interactive modalities is daunting. We must be extraordinarily reflective to keep track of these influences, individually and in aggregate.

Personal Reflection: I love to have fun in life, though I don't have a clear inventory of all of the ways that "living a fun life" has emerged as a lifelong goal. My parents, peers, neighbors, and workmates all have gravitated towards having fun. We joke with each other, we recreate, in a wide variety of ways, to have fun.

I think of my work as a kind of fun, though it can be stressful all too often. One of my mentors, Don Levi, urges me not to think of my work as fun because it takes so much sacrifice and pain to accomplish philosophical projects. My marriage is also fun, but it can often be stressful.

I also identify with the surfing and beatnik/hippy cultures of the 1960s because members of those cultures have a commitment to a relaxed life, filled with fun and physical activity. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as a windsurfer, I felt more relaxed and happier than at many other more stressful times of my life. I wish I could find that sweet spot again!

Then there is the quest for meaning and success in my life to give it richness, not embodied by wealth. This ambition is part of my generation (baby boomers), though for many baby boomers, the quest for wealth has overtaken the quest for meaning. Certainly, other generations also have a quest for these three ambitions to varying degrees. Perhaps these quests are more broadly cultural and historical amongst those of us caught up on the cutting edge of civilization. I have found meaning in helping students succeed, teaching, writing, and being a collaborative colleague, husband, step parent, grandparent, and neighbor.

However, as a Northern European white male, I do not identify with the rapacious aspects of modern

civilization, and its toxic masculinity. Rather, I identify with indigenous people's philosophy and their commitment to maximize human harmony with the rest of nature. Where did I get that part of me? I am 0.2% Native American, but not a tribal member, so I don't have a genetic or cultural connection that accounts for this identity. I have had a deep exposure to environmentalism and have worked with tribes on military/tribal conflict resolution and to help restore Oregon tribes' federal recognition, after the termination of their tribal status during the 1950s. Also, as a beatnik/hippy, I absorbed a cultural influence that regenerated respect for Native American beliefs and practices in the 1950s and 1960s.

All of these influences, which I dredge up from my reflections, provide elements of my identity that both harmonize together, and provide tensions within me, and with those around me. The various narratives, art, music, marketing, media, and the patterns of peer, family, neighborhood, and workplace interactions, create the inner and outer landscape of my life. Navigating it, like flying in an aircraft, sometimes goes smoothly, and sometimes it is filled with turbulence. Welcome to life!

Gould Essay:

Engaged Writing: Mediating Inner and Outer Narratives

Keeping the Strength of One's Argument, while Avoiding the Alienation of One's Readers

"[A]rgumentation is a good way to inquire, to move into new selves, new modes of selfhood, new ways of being in and understanding the world . . . [making argumentation less argumentative] can also enable inquiry, the discovery of what is new." (p.267, Crosswhite)

Abstract: Writing is filled with at least two powerful conflicts. First, the writer, in presenting an argument, must struggle with her internal doubts and objections. Second, the writer must struggle to challenge her reader without alienating him. No wonder writers are often blocked by these inner and outer conflicts. To simplify matters, the writer is tempted to simplify the process by asserting an argument in a take-no-prisoners style: right vs. wrong, correct vs. incorrect. Unfortunately, this polarized approach can alienate the reader who has objections, and mask the worries that the writer might have. I suggest a way to mediate both the inner and outer conflicts that writers face, so that more readers are engaged, and the writer presents more of herself—doubts and all. The conflicts implicit in argumentation are a good thing because they pose unveiled challenges to our thinking. However, we can ill afford to argue in such a way that alienates our readers by minimizing, oversimplifying, ridiculing, ignoring, or not understanding their concerns and potential objections. Successful writing does not manipulate the reader or demonize opponents; rather it persuades by compassionately engaging a wide variety of readers and points of view. Engagement requires one's ability to help the reader be sufficiently validated so that she feels included in a conversation, not alienated from the dialogue.

Text: In the best case of dialogue, we try to bridge any division between us by trying to make our views as compatible as possible with what is important to each other. In this way, the gulf between us is made as narrow as possible, and even if we don't immediately come to a resolution of our differences, we have made it possible to understand each other. In the best case of writing, we imagine the possible alternative points of views of our readers, and incorporate them into our inner meditations.

The problem with writing, as with dialogue, is that we might not seek out disagreement, and instead keep our conversations and consultations within a narrow range of opinion. At the one extreme, adversarial writing is hostile. At the other extreme, writers avoid conflict entirely by framing controversial topics as "clarifications," "new models," and "new ways to organize information."

Too often, academic papers are written in an adversarial style, depending on the drama of correct against incorrect or good against bad. Because of this kind of polarization—even demonization—adversarial writing does not engage the opposition; rather it disengages or alienates readers who feel labeled as "wrong" or "bad" because of their disagreement. Some contemporary theorists are pushing the practice of critical writing towards a more compassionate understanding of the diversity of one's audience (Crosswhite, Chafee). In doing so, they are suggesting that one can be more persuasive when one validates different insights and perspectives, than when one hammers home one's singular argument.

In the following, I suggest an engaged writing style that, first, makes a strong case for *both* sides, rather than trying to defeat the opposition by focusing on its weaknesses. In this way, the opposition feels respected, and both sides are pushed forward in their thinking. Secondly, I suggest that this engaged writing style creates new ways of thinking by engaging the tension between opposing insights and points of views. This creative feature moves beyond merely addressing and validating a diverse audience by using the conflict to generate possible new approaches to a wide variety of dilemmas.

Such a conflict can be embraced by the way we approach the *inner meditation* of our writing. Ideally, writing is where we *discover* our point of view by mulling over a variety of views, concerns, and objections. I often find that the position that I started with is, quite surprisingly, not the position that I end with. In conducting this inner meditation, we look for the insights from a variety of perspectives. The weakness of writing, in comparison to live dialogue, is that we are not finding out about other perspectives directly from the actual people who hold them. In a live discussion, we can be corrected in our misinterpretations of other views. Interestingly, this corrective process entails moving beyond what is said to what is meant. Writers must make the effort to dig for a deep understanding of the insights behind perspectives that, on first glance, do not seem to offer any insight at all. It is far too easy, and mistaken, to suppose we can glean others' views by working solely with just the words said or written. Understanding is a process of discovery, not merely quoting others.

We must never underestimate the value of paraphrasing others' points of view and to check with them if

the paraphrase is accurate. Of course, this is difficult if the original writer or speaker is not available to us; so, it is no wonder that there is such a variety of interpretations of long-dead thinkers.

To overcome the difficulty of capturing others' views—or even our own—we must write—and rewrite—upon further inner consideration and consultation with others. By embracing our own doubts and conflicts about our own work, along with the concerns and objections of others, we continue to refine our work in such a way that we better engage both ourselves and others. My point is that we need to be transparent about those conflicting inner considerations and outer consultations by working them into our writing style. The key value of the engaged writing process is that the tension between different points of view can be quite creative. This creativity can lead us to surprising conclusions or recommendations for further thinking. In the following, I explore examples of navigating between absolute and relative truths on the topics of murder, gang initiations, marijuana use, and faith healing. I show how one might be tempted to merely argue for one view against a seemingly weaker view; then, I show how a more balanced approach can help us move forward by embracing conflict innovatively.

Using the adversarial style, one might try to eliminate the idea that truth is relative by showing that it is self-contradictory. This follows from the assumption that the statement, "truth is relative," functions as an absolute truth and, therefore, must be self-contradictory and false because any claim to absolute truth violates the principle that truth is relative. However, the insight behind the statement, "truth is relative," has not been engaged in this critical reply. Therefore, some effort is required to capture the insight. On further consideration, we could restate the principle in the following way: "If a truth significantly depends on contextual features, then the truth is relative or grounded in those features that must be carefully considered."

An example of this is the claim that "killing endangered species is wrong." Upon careful consideration of one contextual feature, for example, an incurable virus carried by some members of the species that threaten the entire population, we can rather easily conclude that it may be necessary to kill those ill members of the species that threaten the existence of all of the species. Obviously, a quarantine would be more humane, but it some cases, like certain species of whales, may not be possible.

Alternately, some truths do not significantly depend on contextual features, so such truths are not relative or grounded, and are, therefore, absolute. For example, "murder is wrong." This is true partly because murder is defined as wrong. We make the distinction between murder and justified homicide by an understanding that murder is unjustified and certain homicides are justified. The problem with this justification is who judges whether a killing is justified or not? Certainly, we need to look at the context. Self-defense might entail homicide, but is would be justified if there were no seemingly viable nonviolent alternatives. The viability of nonviolent alternatives depends on contextual features. For example, was it a home-invasion that was lethally threatening? Cultural perspective is also important. Some cultural or sub-cultural groups demand revenge killings. Some governments mandate political

assassinations. Do those considerations make homicide justifiable? These circumstances make navigation of the distinction between murder and justifiable homicide difficult indeed. Therefore, while it may be easy to assert that murder is wrong, it may be quite difficult to determine if a homicide is murder.

Following this, the claim that a homicide is murder depends on contextual features (no nonviolent options); therefore, such a claim's truth is relative. In this case, we have an absolute truth (murder is wrong) partnered with a relative truth (homicide is wrong). This partnership represents a kind of synthesis of absolute and relative truths—a surprising possibility.

Turning to a second topic, we might wonder about the relativistic view that the street gang initiation called, "jumping in," can be considered a kind of rite of passage in modern street contexts. Using the adversarial style, one might argue that giving new gang members a severe beating, along with gang indoctrination, is actually a kind of traditional youth-to-adulthood rite of passage. This view follows Malidoma Patrice Some's comparison of American gang initiations and African rites of passage.

This view opposes the opinion that rites of passage are not so fluid that they can be applied to street life. This view is that rites of passage must meet strict standards, and cannot be made relative to context. Therefore, gang rites are merely idiosyncratic membership initiations that only mimic more formal and meaningful rites of passage, no more significant than a fraternity hazing. However, if one takes this objection more seriously, it can be argued that a true rite of passage transmits the wisdom of the culture, not merely a membership in a violent, predatory subgroup. The deeper insight about gang initiations may not depend on whether they are, technically, built on traditional rites of passage. On further thought, gang initiations may help us understand that young gang members are looking for some transition from youth to adulthood, and that gang membership with the mentoring of adult gang members, offers youth the only available transition in certain communities. This insight fits my experience discussing this matter personally with gang-affected youth.

The surprise, in this instance, is that our worry about the question at hand (Is jumping-in really part of a rite of passage?) is not as important as the larger challenge of finding appropriate mentors for gang-exposed youth. We might define "jumping in" as a legitimate rite of passage—or we might not. However, the deeper concern is that young people are given opportunities for nonviolent rites of passage by nonviolent mentors for nonviolent adult enterprises.

Using a similar relative-to-context approach, we might argue, adversarially, that marijuana should be legal because, when used recreationally, it creates only a mild, temporary impairment, and it has legitimate medical uses. Furthermore, criminalizing marijuana use has much greater social costs, in terms of prosecution, imprisonment, and eradication, than decriminalization. However, such a view does not address the risks of operating machinery while impaired, damaging lungs, potential addiction, and

sending the message to youths that marijuana has no hazards. This more absolutist approach argues that any recreational drug should be avoided as much as possible because of its downsides.

A more balanced approach to marijuana could focus on the distinction between use and abuse. Just as alcohol has some physical and mental health benefits, when used appropriately, marijuana also seems to have some physical and mental health uses when used with discretion.

However, both alcohol and marijuana can be abused—and generate significant social costs. Criminalization of drug abuse does not seem to deter patterns of abuse, while generating huge social costs, just as prohibition did not significantly alter patterns of use and abuse of alcohol. Though prohibition lowered overall consumption, it created huge social expenses. The deeper concern generated by this discussion is why drugs of any kind are so often abused in our culture. What is it about our culture that drives people toward intoxicated recreation or abusive levels of self-medication? Ultimately, this deeper question is more important as our larger concern than the criminal status of a drug.

Starting from an absolutist approach, rather than the relativist approach developed in previous examples, one might frame the problem of faith healing by claiming that such practices, when they exclude medical intervention, amount to abuse, particularly amongst children who cannot make the adult decision to avoid medical care. The argument is simply that children die who could have been saved by medical intervention, so withholding this intervention is abusive. Following this determination, the law should be applied punitively to uphold a boundary against abuse.

However, this position does not take seriously the religious views and experiences of those who find faith healing compelling. First, they believe that the omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent power of God is far more trustworthy that the mortal powers of the medical profession. Second, they believe that looking to medicine for help is showing doubt in God, rather than faith. In other words, these religious people feel that they must either trust God or trust human medicine, and that trusting human medicine demonstrates mistrust in God. Third, they have probably experienced many instances where prayer appeared to help people recover from illness.

When an adversarial stance is applied to this conflict, certain religious groups can feel that their faith in God and the power of prayer is trivialized. Furthermore, medical science advocates may not acknowledge how the many failures of medical practice undermine trust in those practices. The cycle of mistrust on both sides leads to the polarization of the conflict. Unfortunately, both sides are perceived within an either/or mode, not a both/and mode. Wouldn’t it be a vast improvement to reframe the conflict so that trust is affirmed for both modern medicine, as part of God’s creation, along with the power of prayer to affirm that the divine hand will be present in all of modern medicine’s practices?

The problem is, how can we get both sides of this argument to discuss this possible synthesis? I doubt

that the punishment approach will produce such a dialogue. Rather, I think that such a discussion might best happen theologically. Doubtless, there are many strict fundamentalists who believe in the healing power of prayer, but still use of medical practice when appropriate. A productive discussion might well occur by bringing together these two kinds of believers in the power of prayer to discuss this issue with a common ground of religious fundamentalism. Discussions within the court system, the secular press, or even academe, cannot replicate the high validation level of two closely identified fundamentalist groups. This conclusion illuminates not only how we need to address those who object to our argument, but also that a productive discussion of this issue must involve people with the greatest common ground—with the greatest shared, relative context.

In the above examples, I have tried to demonstrate an engaged writing process that navigates through absolute viewpoints and points of view that are relative to context—with each transit illuminating new directions for our thinking. With these considerations, I now move to a discussion of the principles guiding the engaged writing style. Not surprisingly, this style has its origins in the practice of conflict resolution. This practice entails a number of different insights and techniques. The insights and practices that are of the greatest value to engaged writing are the ones that view conflict as an opportunity for all disputants to gain a kind of transformation or conscious change as an outcome of the conflict. The opportunity for transformation, offered through conflict, actually involves three different kinds of transformation. First, conflict can be an opportunity for self-transformation. Second, conflict can be an opportunity for one to transform one's relationship with others. Third, conflict can be an opportunity for creating the conditions for the transformation of society.

When we think carefully about a controversial topic or issue, we automatically find ourselves within a conflict. All controversial issues involve at least two opposing perspectives. This conflict can be an opportunity for the three kinds of transformation mentioned above. However, certain conditions must prevail to enhance the opportunity for transformation. These conditions or principles, listed below, are central to the practice of engaged conflict resolution, as well as engaged writing and thinking.

• Be respectful of opposing claims to knowledge on the topic. Even though, initially, there may appear to be little to learn from a different view, disrespect will ensure that one finds little of value.

• Be direct in addressing another perspective. Do not get sidetracked by peripheral issues–or by the weak claims, or weak evidence, of disputants. Try to go to the heart of this issue and engage the strongest claims and strongest evidence for the opposing perspective.

• Take responsibility for both the strengths and weaknesses of your own opinion or position in the dispute. Do not be in denial about your view's short-comings—or by its full potential for insight.

• Be trustful of other points of views. If you address an opposing view in a way that suggests that it

is deliberately misleading, or that its advocates are deceitful, the opportunity for transformation will be slim to none.

• Be mindful of the difference between your experience and the experiences of others. People who have opposing perspectives may live in a world that is radically different from your own. Conflict can be the key to opening up a new world for you–and a new world for those with opposing views.

• Using the conflict creatively by the *opening up of new worlds* is key to the engaged process. Each step toward this goal is important, and perhaps necessary. Respect, directness, responsibility, trust, and mindfulness are the steps that create the possibility of new worldviews for both yourself and for your opponents.

These new worldviews are the basis for self-transformation, transformation of relationships, and social transformation because the expansion of consciousness to include new worlds is transformational to one's core identity, values, and knowledge. Thinking carefully through a transformational process is quite different from merely thinking critically. In more traditional methods, one does not unlock the other's world; rather, one only addresses the opponent's words. In traditional critical thinking approaches, the goal is usually to find the weaknesses in those words, without going beyond them to discover a fuller perspective. All of which is to say that the traditional goal is to win, not to grow.

Another way of viewing the engaged thinking and writing process, in contrast to traditional critical thinking, is to see it as a way to think collaboratively, without the dangers of thinking in isolation, or having others do your thinking for you. If you merely win an argument, you may be thinking in isolation by defeating only *your* perspective of your opposition, rather than fully understanding another view. In such a case, one's opposition will not be convinced, but rather they will feel that their view has been misunderstood, trivialized, or oversimplified.

If you allow the other side to win an argument, you may be letting the opposition do your thinking for you. If you are able to fully see a different perspective by gaining traction in their world–without losing traction in your world–you are in a position to give both sides of the argument something to think about. This involves collaborative or transformational thinking that has the following features:

• Multiple perspectives that are worth consideration.

• No tidy argument for one side aimed at defeating the other side.

• An emphasis on complexities and difficulties.

• Insights that are sometimes contradictory and paradoxical.

• An avoidance of theories and abstractions that seem too simple.

• Thinking that does not deny subjectivity and emotions.

• Viewing the problem in context, not isolation.

• Examples from real life, or from great literature or drama.

• Using the conflict creatively to generate new possible resolutions.

Perhaps the most important quality of engaged thinking and writing is the periodic return to the question, "What is this issue or controversy really about?" In order to answer this question, one needs to explore one's frame of reference or one's predispositions to the issue at hand. One needs to look for the deeper controversy or question. One needs to let the differing sides of the controversy help one gain a more sophisticated understanding of the issue. This form of cyclical inquiry becomes a method, as outlined below:

What is my first impression of what this issue or controversy is really about?

What is my deeper insight into what this is really about?

What evidence or world-view supports my insight?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of my insight?

What is a different, or opposing insight—its evidence and world-view?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this different, or opposing, insight?

Can I create or discover a new insight by embracing the conflict, possibly combining the strengths of these different insights?

Given what I have learned, what is this issue or controversy really about?

As mentioned above, the field of critical thinking can sometimes focus too closely and narrowly on analyzing words, rather than trying to discover their underlining meaning or insight. Oftentimes, a critical analysis can seem like an attack on the weaknesses of the presentation, not the content. This attack can feel like an adversarial prosecution of a case, rather than a cooperative investigation into the matter. Such a cooperative investigation is based upon authentic compassion for the deeper concerns being presented.

What is the deeper worry being expressed?

What deeper controversy is being addressed?

This alternate approach feels more supportive, and less like an attack that must be repelled. It is my contention that more careful thinking and writing can take place in a supportive environment, rather than a hostile, adversarial environment. An argument can be asserted in a way that is both challenging and respectful—even transformational.

Part Two: Heidegger's Meditative Thinking

Readings:

"Memorial Address" by Martin Heidegger

"Insights from Heidegger's Meditative Thinking that Deepens Conflict Facilitation Practice" by Robert Gould

Key Dilemma of Part Two:

Does Heidegger's advice concerning "meditative thinking" depend on us giving up the notion that each individual is radically isolated from others?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

What are random coincidences and what are deeper connections?

Throughout my life, I have experienced supposed coincidences that seemed to have lifelong meanings.

There are Native American traditions that believe that coincidences are never fully random, that each coincidence is significant, some being powerfully meaningful. When I attended PSU, as a freshman in 1967, I dated someone with whom I quickly fell deeply in love. She and I shared a kiss in Washington Park that seemed to have mystical power—I will never forget that moment with her on a specific grassy hillside, where all of the elements of the moment seem to sing together is perfect harmony. I played football with her talented future husband, who went on to play professionally and become a wealthy businessman. Though we parted on good terms, I called her up once, years later, to say hello; she was angry that I called. I met a women years later, who—it turned out—worked for her husband. She told me interesting stories about my ex. I lived, for a time, in SE Portland, and used to run up to Mt. Tabor; she, coincidentally, lived with her family on my

running route. When my wife and I purchased our home, our real estate agent went to high school with my ex; she told me more interesting stories. Our lives took quite different directions, but that moment in the park will stay with me endlessly—for what reason I'm not sure I will ever know. Furthermore, another ex of mine introduced me to my wife, and we are all close friends—those relationships are also filled with coincidences. For me, these coincidences enrich my life, and convince me that we are not radically isolated from each other. But coincidences are no objective proof of connection.

Questions:

1. What are Heidegger's four ways to be a meditative thinking?

Building on the central theme of this chapter, Heidegger starts by saying that we should strive to find "meaning through connection," where Heidegger affirms that we find others, and our world, meaningful, when we can connect with it. Next, Heidegger suggests that we practice a "releasement from things," where we get **unstuck** from how we think about others, and the various aspects of our world, so that we can see things afresh. After that, Heidegger suggests that we should have an "openness to the mystery" of others and our world, affirming that we cannot reduce others, our world, and even ourselves, to a simple description, formula, or truth. Having truths can so easily turn into dogmas. Heidegger's view of knowledge is that it is on a continuum between solid and liquid, where our knowledge needs to be somewhat flexible, not stuck in a hard place, nor too fluid to stand its ground. Furthermore, we need to develop "comfort with paradox," so that we resist the urge to solve the paradox.

2. How is meditative thinking useful for conflict workers?

Meditative thinking is particularly useful for conflict workers because it can be so easy to overgeneralize a solution to a problem, when it would be wiser to affirm that certain differences will remain, and must continue to inform a dynamic, fueled by an ongoing paradox, embedded in the differences between us. Finally, Heidegger suggests that we focus our attention to embedded paradoxes, the "things that don't go together," because we might find that they inform each other more than we see at first glance.

As an example, we might suppose that African American police officers would generally treat African American criminal suspects better than white police officers, however, the criminal stereotyping of police forces, which disproportionately target African Americans, can infect both black and white police officers. It was reported that a Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP spokesperson said that many black cops "become blue" to "survive in the police department." This statement was then misreported to say that 'black cops are blue, not black.' In reality, black cops are both black and blue, having to navigate both black culture and blue culture. For those of us that want disproportionate police violence against African

Americans to stop, we need to understand the difficulties that they have navigating black and white culture, as well as black and blue culture. In practicing this compassionate and paradoxical view, we will have a better understanding about the flawed ways that our white privileged society interacts with people of color.

Summary of Heidegger's Meditative Thinking for Conflict Processes

The following are my recommendations for using engaged thinking in conflict processes, starting with Heidegger's notion of meditative thinking. Heidegger's first three steps are a good warm-up exercise for any conflict facilitator. A conflict facilitator will need to release preconceptions, be open to the mystery that will be presented in the conflict facilitation process, and engage the contradictions and paradoxes that emerge from the dispute's two sides.

Meditate on the notion of "releasement from things." A conflict facilitator needs to release preconceptions about the conflict to be addressed, as well as the conflict facilitator's personal concerns of the day. The conflict facilitator brings all of one's own baggage into any conflict facilitation process, so it is important to develop an attitude of releasement toward everything in the conflict facilitator's life.

Maintain "openness to the mystery." The conflict facilitator must always be curious about what will transpire in any conflict facilitation process. Without curiosity and open-mindedness, the process will seem canned and rigid. With curiosity and open-mindedness, the process will seem fresh and flexible.

Get comfortable with paradox, "what at first sight does not go together at all." Conflicts generally present a difference that creates a contradiction. It is unusual that one side presents all of the truth and the other side presents only falsehood. When truths are emerging from both sides, a natural paradox emerges. It is the conflict facilitator's responsibility to embrace this paradox and help the disputants come to the same realization. A successful facilitation depends on this transformational insight.

Embrace the wisdom of listening, not the genius of talk. Listening is wise because it leads to understanding. Talk can be clever and insightful, but only in the presence of listening.

Validate and normalize the differences that are being presented by the conflict at hand. This is the key step in beginning to bring comfort to uncomfortable conflict. Conflict can make the disputants feel invalidated and abnormalized. Reversing this tendency, from the very beginning of a conflict facilitation process, is crucial to establishing a tangible sense of safety.

Help the disputants explore the layers of difference between them: beyond positions to interests, values, roles, and ongoing dramas. Conflicts generally start with two polarized positions. Deconstructing these

positions usually leads to an array of differences that combine to trigger the intensity of conflict. Identifying and isolating these differences can lead to acceptance and accommodation.

Watch the drama that is unfolding. Help situate the immediate drama within larger familial, workplace, community, and cultural dramas. The dramatic tension between two disputants is usually not an isolated drama. We play roles that are defined in relationship to our families, or professions, our peers, our community and culture. These social roles impinge on our most personal conflicts.

Focus on the dynamics of this drama. Who is the stronger narrator? How can this create a power difference? How can the quieter party find a stronger voice? It would be quite rare that both parties to a conflict have equal power. Social roles create a diverse array of experiences of personal power. One person may feel powerful professionally and with one's peers, and powerless within family and community dynamics.

Observe how the drama triggers an internal drama within the conflict facilitator. How is the conflict facilitator's inner drama affecting the dynamics of the conflict at hand? The conflict facilitator's neutrality or co-advocacy is always threatened by the internalization of the conflict at hand. The conflict facilitator must continue to struggle with internal triggers as the conflict facilitation process unfolds.

Resist the urge to understand this drama in terms of the dramas of other conflicts. See this conflict as unique to the parties and the particular circumstance that they are in. A conflict facilitator can learn from previous conflicts without imposing those insights rigidly onto the current conflict.

Assess what part of the drama can be processed today, and what part of the drama must necessarily take longer—sometimes, much longer. Conflicts that involve ongoing relationships are not band-aid situations. Underlying tensions emerge in conflict after conflict until those deeper differences are addressed. However, this process cannot be rushed. Disputants must wait until they are ready to dig deeper and face what may be disorienting differences and internal insights.

Reflect appropriate aspects of the conflict facilitator's inner meditation to the disputing parties, so that their urge to *calculate* a resolution is balanced with the need to *meditate* on the conflict's deeper significance. A meditative conflict facilitator models the engaged thinking process by folding one's meditations into the discussion.

Give homework to the disputants for the next session, which includes both calculative (autonomous) and meditative (engaged) elements. Assign this work in terms that the disputants can easily process. It might be helpful to write it down (two copies!).

Acknowledge that the optimal conflict facilitation process includes more than mediation. Parties should be encouraged to seek or maintain personal therapy and meditation practices.

Key to the meditative/engaged thinking process is *connection*. Though we are capable of thinking autonomously, we are also capable of *thinking together* in a way that does not necessarily reduce to group-think. The key to avoiding group-think is the capacity to think autonomously. Likewise, the key to avoiding isolated thinking is the capacity of thinking together

Radical Acceptance and Heideggerian Rootedness

It might be helpful to give more detail to Heidegger's notion of rootedness. He talked about rootedness in terms of geographical and cultural location—specifically his location in the German landscape and culture. Here, I suggest a more situational rootedness that might be particularly useful for conflict facilitators. I use the term, "radical acceptance," because the term, "radical," can mean a root or fundamental principle—and I believe that such acceptance can be a key principle for conflict facilitators. I'm also using the term, "radical," to mean *complete* acceptance.

First, this notion of radical acceptance means that we *own* whatever circumstance we are in. It is, indeed, *our* circumstance, *not* one that we are merely passing through like a tourist. Second, we accept the perspectives, experience, personalities, and motivations of everyone else in this particular circumstance, including our own. We might use Heidegger's notion of "mood" to capture the totality of any circumstance, transcending the dichotomy of self and other, to include a mixture of all participants in the circumstance.

If we find ourselves judging the circumstances that we find ourselves in, then we are preventing this radical acceptance from occurring. Judging is natural, but for conflict facilitators, it must not overtake the core of our work which is to create an atmosphere of safety through validation and love. Of course, if a circumstance is experienced as unsafe, one must take measures to either escape the circumstance or deescalate the potential violence. Importantly, such de-escalation, in my opinion, depends on radical acceptance.

It is also important to remember that conflict processes depend on balancing power differences. However, the exact dynamics of power in any circumstances may be difficult to know, without fully understanding the experiences of all of those in the circumstance. It may be that those who are usually thought to be powerful do not experience having much power—and that those who are usually thought *not* to have power actually have more power than expected. Though conflict facilitators must be sensitive to issues of justice and empowerment, we must not be dogmatic about how justice and empowerment play out in any circumstance.

Radical acceptance helps us adapt to the unique circumstances that we find ourselves in. By freeing ourselves from preconceptions about ourselves and those around us, we open ourselves to knowing the realities that are converging in the moment of our arrival and participation. We welcome the circumstance and everyone in it—rather than dreading it or trying to dominate it.

Gould Essay:

Insights from Heidegger's Meditative Thinking that Deepens Conflict Facilitation Practice

> "Is man, then, a defenseless and perplexed victim at the mercy of the irresistible superior power of technology? He would be if man today abandons any intention to pit meditative thinking decisively against merely calculative thinking."
>
> Heidegger, *Memorial Address* (1955)

Abstract: Heidegger's notion of meditative thinking appears to offer insights that can transform conflict facilitation practice by suggesting a deeper level of engagement. Heidegger's contrasts calculative thinking and meditative thinking in his curiously prophetic 1955 "Memorial Address." In this speech, he worries that the "rootlessness" of calculative thinking may be a bigger concern than global nuclear annihilation. As a remedy to the feared complete mechanization of thought, he does not recommend its rejection, but rather suggests that it be balanced with thinking that is engaged in irreducible context. For conflict resolvers, it seems particularly useful to express this contrast as autonomous (calculative) thinking and engaged (meditative) thinking. Heidegger's suggests that four insights fill out his notion of meditative thinking:

Meaning Through Connection

Releasement from Things

"Openness to the Mystery"

Comfort with Paradox

Text: This article is written to appeal to conflict resolvers looking for different, and hopefully better, ways of approaching the conflict facilitation process. I suggest that new approaches can be generated by a different kind of thinking; Heidegger calls it meditative thinking. Current mainstream conflict facilitation processes tend to be influenced by what Heidegger describes as calculative thinking:

> [Calculative thinking's] peculiarity consists in the fact that whenever we plan, research, and organize, we always reckon with conditions that are given. We take them

> into account with the calculated intension of their serving specific purposes. Thus, we can count on definite results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and investigates. Such thinking remains calculation even if it neither works with numbers nor uses an adding machine or computer. Calculative thinking computes. (p. 46)

This description of calculative thinking appears to describe much of the way we think about the conflict facilitation process. We "reckon with the conditions that are given." We take these conditions "into account with the calculated intention of their serving specific purposes," in our case, the purposes of resolving conflict. In essence, we calculate our way through the conflict facilitation process, starting with the conditions given to us by the disputants, and going through an 'organized plan' that leads to a "definite result."

In contrast to calculative thinking, Heidegger suggests meditative thinking as a way to "contemplate [ ] the meaning which [reins] in everything that is." He defines meditative thinking as a four-way combination of connected meaning (above), "releasement from things," "openness to the mystery," and an engagement with paradox or contradiction—"what at first sight does not go together at all." These qualities suggest insights from the traditions of Buddhism, narrative, and paradoxical insight. Conflict resolvers who already work within these traditions may have already incorporated some or all of these insights into their practice.

In this article, I show how a Heideggerian analysis of thinking may help transform conflict facilitation practice. Conflict resolvers may have an interest in this approach if they are already sympathetic towards Heideggerian discourse, frustrated with limitations of mechanical thinking, or willing to take a leap of faith into a view of the world as fundamentally connected (perhaps even run-through with being, consciousness, subjectivity, personality, and the sacred). In such a universe, the world is *more* than a mechanistic relationship of energy and matter [nature's "gigantic gasoline station" (p. 50)] with epiphenomenal extensions—*more* than a world of empirical sensibility and collapsible/extinguishable chimera. Whether our world is one or the other cannot be proved with empirical data or logical argument because there are no secure premises for either side—nothing *before* this metaphysical choice. Both views are coherent, and importantly for Heidegger, each suggests a radically different kind of thinking.

Calculative thinking follows from a mechanistic worldview; meditative thinking follows from a worldview not limited to the material. Interestingly, on Heidegger's view, both kinds of thinking have a role to play in our lives. It is like affirming that energy behaves as both particle and wave. In the following, I will not attempt to make an argument for the worldview presupposed by Heidegger, I will merely accept it as a logically possible description of our world—one that may be compelling to people with quite diverse metaphysical perspectives.

To begin our inquiry about how meditative thinking can help improve conflict facilitation practice,

I suggest that we start by realizing how powerfully we are committed to calculative thinking within western culture. To illustrate this, we should consider our common notion of intelligence. We generally think one is smart who knows a lot of things, scores well on IQ tests, can communicate complex ideas and facts, can construct and test theories, is, perhaps, a member of Mensa, etc. We think this person is smart because they know a variety of complex things, and can do complicated things. On Heidegger's account, a smart person is an expert in calculative thinking, certainly reflecting a kind of intelligence.

However, Heidegger warns us that calculative thinking can become dangerously ungrounded, insensitive to context, confounded by paradox, and incapable of thinking beyond the examination of things and the manipulation of concepts. To overcome those limitations, Heidegger suggests a form of wisdom that balances the benefits of calculative thinking with a kind of thinking that enables us to find deeper meanings and insights—beyond mere calculations.

On his account, calculative thinking is abstracted from context, is based on logically distinct universal categories, and assumes that the universe is constructed like a mechanism with parts and features that interact, while remaining separate. Heidegger believes that, to a certain degree, this is an *accurate* account; however, it is not a *complete* account. A complete account of the universe must include a notion of connection and context that is not reducible to its salient features—because the aggregate of salient features does not equal the whole, one's being in context.

Heidegger uses the term, "rootedness," to describe the intimate and complete connection that we have with our context. For Heidegger, a person is not a thing amongst other things; rather a person is a specific and personal being intimately connected to the specific ground or totality of Being, which is the person's greater context in the world that is not merely our material reality alone. In other words, this greater Being runs throughout the world, whose center is a personal human being.

None of this talk about human beings and their irreducible contexts undermines the facts of mechanical nature; it merely seeks to enrich our understanding that our life in this universe is not reducible to the interactions of mechanical matter alone. Personal or subjective being and our greater context are irreducible dimensions of our connected universal existence. The paradox being embraced here is that the universe is both a collection of separate entities, while a unified connected whole, centered on each individual being—within the totality of a greater Being.

Heidegger's insights about the nature of the universe play out in our thinking patterns. Calculative thinking assumes that knowledge can be constructed from logical relations between significant factors and features of our shared lives. Meditative thinking, while not denying the virtues of calculative thinking, digs deeper into the contradictions, paradoxes, dramatic tensions, and creative opportunities lying in the background of our ordinary calculations and our absorption in the technology that surrounds us.

Because conflict facilitation engages contradictions, paradoxes, dramatic tensions, and creative opportunities, meditative thinking is particularly useful for conflict facilitation because it is designed to embrace a universe understood where these qualities are not aberrations, but intrinsic features. To show the advantage of meditative thinking within conflict facilitation practice, let's look at a typical case of divorce mediation.

Calculative Thinking and Meditative Thinking in Divorce Mediation

In divorce mediation, each party is urged to clarify the specific things that they need, so that they can live separate lives in a reasonably comfortable manner. Teasing out the key features of their new lives apart is a key to creating a way to divide up assets, responsibilities, and parenting roles. This process is appropriately addressed through calculative thinking. Each party calculates their resources, needs and responsibilities, while the mediator ensures that those needs and responsibilities are clearly articulated and fully understood by both parties. However, this calculation can go horribly wrong. It can go wrong because the parties might not be aware of the deeper meaning of their divorce, the paradoxes that it poses, and the dramas that are driving their radically transforming roles in the negotiations.

In terms of meditative thinking, the conflict facilitation process needs to seek these deeper meanings, paradoxes, and dramatic meta-narratives that are in the background of what the parties currently think are their needs and interests. How does the mediator transition between calculative and meditative thinking? I suggest that mediators ask divorcing couples to reflect on the deeper meaning of their divorce, the contradictions that they feel, and the greater drama of their lives that continues to inform the roles that they play. Bringing these background issues up may be difficult, especially if the mediation is conceived as short-term. However, there is good reason to suppose that divorce mediation is often too short-term.

In divorces, partners grapple with the loss of a project of creating a meaningful marriage and family that recreates, corrects, or rejects the meaning of their families of origin, their previous couplings, or their single lives. Abandoning a marriage means returning to the needs that were the impetus to marry in the first place. In other words, a divorce confronts the newly single parties with the renewed challenge to establish meaning within their lives on radically different terms than during the life of the marriage.

While married, partners tend to split responsibilities and roles where: one plays the role of chief breadwinner; one plays the role of chief parent; one plays the role of chief nurturer; one plays the role of chief entertainer; one plays the role of family connecter; one plays the role of skeptic; one plays the role of budget regulator; one plays the role of vacation planner, etc. Divorce involves a huge transition of roles from those within a couple to those of a single or differently-coupled person.

These dramatic shifts in context and meaning can be quite destabilizing. Within this radical transition,

can the parties really be trusted to unreflectively know their deeper needs and role realignments? These are *things* to fit into our calculative thinking. However, *things* look quite different within different contexts and consequently different constructions of self. Would any of us trust ourselves to anticipate what we will be like—our sense of subjectivity—within a radically new context? If we can know this new self at all, it can only be known through a meditative thinking that focuses on the deepest sense of meaning and personal identity.

However, it is more likely that a divorcing couple will only know their needs and roles *after* they have been living separately for a significant period of time. This suggests that divorce mediation may be rather ineffectual with a couple that has just begun the separation process. If the mediator asks the disputants to reflect on what they deeply hold to be meaningful and on their deepest sense of self-identity, then such reflection must be done with the appropriate skills, over a protracted period of time, to fully engage meditative thinking. On this insight, at least in cases of just-separating people, divorce mediation should not be such a short process, but rather a longer-term decoupling counseling, as well as mediating, process.

The Tension between Engagement and Autonomy

Having given an example of meditative thinking within conflict facilitation practice, I now turn to a consideration of Heidegger's project of meditative thinking by reframing it as a kind of oscillation between engagement (connection) and disengagement (autonomy). Within this duality, we can think together with others, with nature, and with the world (engagement); or we can think alone, in isolation, against other viewpoints (disengagement). In this way, Heidegger's notion of meditative thinking is reframed as engaged thinking or thinking through connection, and his notion of calculative thinking is reframed as disengaged or autonomous thinking. This reframing process is meant to further help us in our conflict facilitation practice.

Disengaging ourselves from those around us allows us to create new viewpoints, critique the group's received wisdom, as well as resist the pressures of group-think. Beyond these virtues, disengaged or autonomous thinking may give us a way of defending one's unique viewpoint or abstracting truths that are inaccessible when we are immersed in our cultural biases. Critical or autonomous thinking, if not rationality itself, is often understood as based on our ability to disengage from culture, group, or other biasing influences.

However, disengaged thinking appears to have worrisome limitations: We are lured into believing that the best kind of thinking is an isolated, individual activity—we are urged to think alone, even when we are in dialogue with others. We are urged to distrust the influences of dialogue or thinking together. We find ourselves distrusting the effect of speaking to a particular audience for fear that our thinking will

irrationally bend to the needs of that audience. We distrust our cultural context and our emotion. We tend to believe that thinking together veers toward group-think, rather than a productive collaboration.

In my reframing of Heidegger's insights, I suggest a radical shift in the possibilities of thinking by creating a discipline of thinking together that does not fall victim of either the isolation of critical thinking, or the biases of group think. Key to the view that I am asserting is that the distinction between *autonomous thinking-alone (thinking-against)* and *engaged thinking-together (thinking-with)* is a real distinction, and not merely a distinction in appearance. I support this position, against challenges to my account, by looking carefully at what happens when we are optimally in dialogue, such as when we lose our ego in a productive mediation or brainstorming session, as opposed to when our autonomy prevents us from a fully engaged dialogue. I note that this sort of engaged, reflective method has roots, not only within a Heideggerian sensibility, but within Zen Buddhism and elements of Native American animist thought as well. If a compelling case can be made for the notion of *thinking together*—distinct from *autonomous or disengaged thinking*, while avoiding *enmeshed thinking*—then the *engaged thinking* process gains an important grounding.

To make my position clearer, it might be helpful to consider another example. You and I are engaged in a discussion on a given subject. We have different perspectives, but neither of us is dominating the other. There is a free flow of ideas, opinions, and viewpoints. Each of us listens intently to the other, taking each other's perspective more and more into account. As we talk, there is the strong sense that we are thinking together—even across a difference. When we reflect back on what we have been doing, we might wonder, "Are we two minds trying to find a way to connect on this topic; or are we one mind, trying to overcome our internal differences?" A common response to this question within western culture is that two people are never less than two minds—two souls—two brains. However, strands of alternate philosophies suggest that ultimately, we are one mind—one soul—though we will always be two brains. Experientially, one overarching mind or soul must still overcome the impediments of bodily difference, so the difficulty in communication would still be felt on this alternative understanding. Ultimately, oneness does not deny difference, as the universe is both one and many. The debate is between the camp that views us as *isolated and many*, and the camp that views us as *connected and many*.

To summarize the tension between engagement and autonomy, it may be useful to embrace a three-part paradox in our experience of thinking. First, we can have the experience of thinking autonomously for ourselves. Second, we can feel like others are doing our thinking for us (group think). Third, we can experience a deep connection with the thinking of others, without losing our autonomy. (Interestingly, we might have difficulty thinking at all, without a rather profound understanding that there is thinking going on around us.) If we reject the third part of this paradox, we reject the possibility of thinking together on the grounds that such a connected experience is an illusion, as well as a logical contradiction.

Alternatively, to embrace the third part of the paradox, we must suppose that we can think together, without sacrificing our ability to think autonomously.

Two Contrasting Descriptions of Thinking in Dialogue

To deepen this discussion of our thinking, I suggest that we look at two ways to describe how we think when we are in dialogue. The mainstream western view is that dialogue engages individual interpretive centers, thinking apart; the alternate view is that dialogue can connect multiple people into a unified effort at thinking together. An example of the latter was explored in detail by Edwin Hutchins's (1995) analysis of international shipping navigation in *Cognition in the Wild* by illustrating at least on kind of thinking that is, arguably, out in the world, rather than isolated in brains.

The common western view is that all communication is a kind of interpretation of each word or gesture that is expressed by another. As this account goes, we have brains more powerful and sophisticated than current computer technology, so we can interpret and translate in virtually an instant. This instantaneousness allows us to experience smoothly flowing dialogue and a seamless stream of mutual understanding. However, on this view, there is only the illusion of connection—only an approximate understanding of the other's expressions. Isolated brains can only roughly, and self-referentially, know the realities of other isolated brains. In contrast, a less fragmented and more holistic perspective presumes that even when our experiences are radically different, there is a connected reality that underlies these differences.

As the reader can clearly see, there is a serious disjunction between these two metaphysical views. The mind-as-brain view asserts the incomprehensibility of consciousness transcending the boundaries of the brain. On the other view, the mind or soul is not restricted to the physicality of the brain; minds and souls can connect through an overarching consciousness—a world run-through with consciousness. A mind or soul can be emergent in the world (mind as world), not merely the brain (mind as brain). Mind-as-world can have intelligence; mind-as-world can have memory, hold history, and gesture towards its and our future.

My purpose is to show that reconciling these two metaphysical views is seemingly impossible when articulated in either/or, polarized form. However, if we shift our focus from metaphysical presumptions to a description of thinking phenomena, we find that we experience both autonomy and connection. Using the wave/particle analogy, we can experience our thinking as either isolated particle or wave of dialogue. If we experience waves of dialogue flowing smoothly with mutual understanding, then we may be reasonably safe to presume that we are thinking with one mind. Only when misunderstandings, or other obstructions to clarity, occur, do we rebound to a sense of a more isolated mind. Even when a misunderstanding occurs, it is likely that both parties will experience a mutual disjunction—in this

way, even somewhat isolated minds seem aware of their overarching unity (through an awareness of difference) within a given conversation.

Autonomous and Engaged Thinking in Forgiveness Processes

Returning to the application of these insights to the practice of conflict facilitation, we can ask, as we did earlier, how this duality deepens our practice. A mediator can alternately frame the conflict facilitation process as the sharing of individual thoughts or thinking together—autonomous thinking as well as engaged thinking. How does this contrast play out? The following description of the forgiveness process can help illustrate the complementary roles of these two kinds of thinking. In the process of forgiveness, both parties—perpetrator and victim—undergo an identity transformation. The perpetrator can begin to have an identity that is *not* dominated by "perpetrator;" and the victim can begin to have an identity that is *not* dominated by "victim." Their new identities are not merely a return to an old identity, but an achievement of a *safe* and *authentic* identity that—for both parties—is neither dominated by "perpetrator" or "victim," perhaps for the first time in either of their lives.

Given the identity transformation that is at the heart of the forgiveness process, there certainly is a role for a level of engagement that follows from Heidegger's principles of meditative thinking. First, there must be the achievement of "meaning through connection," where victim and perpetrator both find a deeper level of identity through the connection made in the forgiveness process. Second, there must be a "releasement from things" in order to let go of past dysfunctional identities. Third, there must be "openness to the mystery" because no one knows, in advance, the shape of one's world after an identity transformation. Fourth, one must engage "what at first sight does not go together at all" so that one can begin to imagine having an *earlier part* of one's life defined by "victim" or "perpetrator," and a *later part* of the same life transformed into a safe, authentic, and more complete identity. All of this work is done through an engagement with others, through dialogue and connection with the world of possibility.

The work of this kind of engaged thinking must also be complemented by calculative (autonomous or critical) thinking that works through an analysis from an individual perspective, disconnected from others and the world. Each party to a forgiveness process must think through such a transformation in a way that makes sense, given each person's individual context and cultural background. There must be a step-by-step process that each individual can imagine, to map out realistic and attainable goals. Calculative or autonomous thinking is designed to serve each individual's reasoning, against the reasoning of anyone else. In short, forgiveness must make sense as both a collective process, as well as an individual process. Therefore, different kinds of thinking are appropriate to each process—the connected world of engagement—and the disconnected world of individual autonomy.

Conclusion: Steps toward a Transformed Conflict Facilitation Practice

In the following, I summarize how Heidegger's four insights within meditative thinking can transform conflict facilitation practice. Before a mediation session, I recommend that conflict resolvers use these insights as a warm-up exercise. A mediator should tune her thinking toward finding deeper meanings through a full engagement with the contexts of disputants and mediator alike. She will also need to, as much as possible, release herself from any preconceptions of both the disputants and the conflict(s) at hand. She must become "open to the mystery," so that the uncertainties of a conflict facilitation process do not generate mediator anxiety, or a need to impose order on chaos prematurely. She should also creatively engage the contradictions and paradoxes that emerge from the dispute's two (or more) sides.

Meaning through Connection

Heidegger urges us to engage our full context in all of its infinite meaning. "[C]ontemplate the meaning which reigns (sic) in everything that is." To facilitate this connection, the mediator must seek transparency between disputants and between the mediator and the disputants. Therefore, the mediator should reflect appropriate aspects of her inner meditation on the conflict to the disputing parties in such a way that the disputants' urge to *calculate* a resolution is balanced with the need to *meditate* on the conflict's deeper significance. In this way, a meditative mediator models the engaged or meditative thinking process by gently folding her meditations into the discussion.

To encourage disputants to seek deeper meanings, it may be useful for the mediator to give homework to the disputants for the next session. This homework should include both calculative (autonomous) and meditative (engaged) elements. Assign this work in terms that the disputants can easily process. It might be helpful to write it down (two copies!).

It also seems useful to acknowledge that the optimal conflict facilitation process includes more than mediation. Parties should be encouraged to seek or maintain personal therapy and meditation practices to help them find deeper meanings and connections.

Releasement from Things

A mediator should continuously meditate on the notion of "releasement from things." In addition, she needs to be mindful of how the disputants' personal and cultural baggage will frequently play a strong role in any conflict facilitation process. A mediator needs to help disputants release preconceptions about each other and the conflict to be addressed. The mediator needs to model this releasement, as well as the difficulties entailed in accomplishing this goal. Ultimate releasement may be impossible for anyone but a saint; however, movement toward releasement, though slow, may be a catalyst toward resolution.

"Openness to the Mystery"

The mediator must always be curious about what will transpire in any conflict facilitation process. Without curiosity and open-mindedness, the process may become canned and rigid. With curiosity and open-mindedness, the process will seem fresh and flexible. Key to this openness is the mediator's embrace of the wisdom of listening, not the genius of talk. Listening is wise because it leads to understanding. Talk can be clever and insightful, but only in the presence of listening.

Turning to a visual metaphor, the mediator must watch the drama that is unfolding. She should help situate the immediate drama within larger familial, workplace, community, and cultural dramas. The dramatic tension between two disputants is usually not an isolated drama. We play roles that are defined in relationship to our families, or professions, our peers, our community and culture. These social roles impinge on our most personal conflicts. When we focus on the dynamics of this drama, we wonder about issues such as: Who is the stronger narrator? How can this create a power difference? How can the quieter party find a stronger voice? It would be quite rare that both parties to a conflict have equal power. To complicate the issue further, social roles create a diverse array of experiences of personal power. One person may feel powerful professionally and with one's peers, and powerless within the family and community.

A meditative mediator should observe how the drama triggers an internal drama within the mediator herself. How is the mediator's inner drama affecting the dynamics of the conflict at hand? The mediator's neutrality or co-advocacy is always threatened by the internalization of the dispute. The mediator must continue to struggle with internal triggers as the conflict facilitation process unfolds. Additionally, the mediator needs to resist the urge to understand this drama in terms of the dramas of their other life conflicts. She needs to see this conflict as unique to the parties and the particular circumstance that they are in, as well as a part of a larger pattern. A mediator can learn from previous conflicts without imposing those insights rigidly onto the current conflict.

Furthermore, a meditative mediator needs to assess what part of the drama can be processed today, and what part of the drama must necessarily take longer—sometimes, much longer. Conflicts that involve ongoing relationships are not band-aid situations. Underlying tensions emerge in conflict after conflict until those deeper differences are addressed. However, this process cannot be rushed. The mediator must be patient with the disputants until they are ready to dig deeper and face what may be disorienting differences and internal insights.

Comfort with Paradox

Heidegger's meditative thinking involves an embrace of "what at first sight does not go together at all." Conflicts generally present a difference that creates a contradiction. It is unusual that one side presents all of the truth and the other side presents only falsehood. When truths emerge from different contexts, a natural paradox emerges. It is the mediator's responsibility to engage this paradox and help

the disputants engage it on their own terms. A successful facilitation depends on this transformational insight.

Disputant differences drive paradoxes that may be difficult to unsnarl. The mediator's first step is to validate and normalize the differences that are being presented by the conflict at hand. This is the key step in beginning to bring comfort to uncomfortable difference. Conflict can make the disputants feel invalidated and abnormalized. Reversing this tendency, from the very beginning of a conflict facilitation process, is crucial to establishing a tangible sense of safety.

Furthermore, the meditative mediator needs to help the disputants explore the layers of difference between them: beyond positions to interests, values, roles, and ongoing dramas. Conflicts generally start with two polarized, oppositional positions that trigger the intensity of the conflict. Deconstructing these positions usually leads to an array of differences that, when identified and isolated, can lead to some common ground, acceptance and accommodation. Always start with perceptions, and then validate the insights and truths within those perceptions.

In summation, the key to the meditative/engaged thinking process is *connection*. Though we are capable of thinking autonomously, we are also capable of *thinking together* in a way that does not necessarily reduce to group-think. The key to avoiding group-think is the capacity to think autonomously. Likewise, the key to avoiding isolated thinking is the capacity of thinking together.

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Chapter Five: Navigating Abundance and Scarcity; Class Conflicts and Economic Justice

Part One: Economic Abundance and Scarcity

Readings:

"Scarcity, Abundance, and Violence" by Robert Gould

Key Dilemma of Part One:

Can we resolve the conflict between abstract value (money) and the real values of human community and the collective generosity that it requires?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

I am a member of the "baby boomer generation," a post-WWII birth increase that, until 2019, has been the largest population bubble in existence. The media often portrays my generation as helping America towards social and economic justice. Given the rent and tuition increases for today's college students, there is suspicion that baby boomers are not as committed to social and economic justice, as they have been portrayed. As reported in the New York Times (7/21/2019), "According to Pew Research polling, boomers now identify with the conservatism of the Republican right more readily than any other political ideology." Will this happen to the rebels of today's younger generations?

Glossary:

- *Indigenous/Native/Ancestral Peoples*: Populations of people who preceded civilization, and who, today, continue to maintain the practices and beliefs of their ancestors.
- *Gift Economy*: Societies where items of value are internally gifted to members on the basis of

ability to gift and need for gift: indigenous, utopian, and end-state communism.

- *Reciprocal Gift Economy*: Societies that externally trade with each other societies, based on the principle of reciprocating gifts. There is no bartering or monetary value placed on trade items. This sort of trade is understood as promoting friendship between societies or overcoming hostilities: indigenous, utopian, and end-state communism.
- *Bartering Economy*: Bartering began when reciprocal gift economies changed from friendly exchanges to ascribing qualitative values to trade items. A trade transaction occurred when both parties came to believe that the exchange was reciprocally worth the trade in more complex trade networks and early civilizations across the globe.
- *Monetized economy*: Money developed when qualitative values for trade items transitioned into quantitative values, such that an accounting system was created to keep track of debits and credits. This occurred when more complex trade networks and early civilizations transitioned to, or were conquered by, larger civilizations.
- *Commodified economy*: An economy becomes commodified when monetized, trade item, economies transform the value of human and animal labor into monetary terms. Furthermore, people themselves become commodities within the institutions of chattel slavery, indentured servitude, women-as-property, and currently, human identities are defined by what they own or have power-over. This is the condition of global capitalism.
- *Diverse web of life*: Healthy ecosystems (and by extension, human-participating, ecosystems) require a diverse web of multiple species across the spectrum of living organisms that are adapted to a particular ecological niche.
- *Mutual aid*: Healthy ecosystems (and by extension, human-participating, ecosystems) require an undercurrent of mutual aid, for the long-term sustainability of ecosystems; even though there will be a certain level of predation, as part the natural management of species' overpopulations.

Questions:

1. What is the distinction between a scarcity-oriented economy and an abundance-oriented economy?

Modern civilization has generated a scarcity-oriented economy where human talents, resources, or commodities that are scarce are valued higher than those talents, resources, or commodities that are abundant. Within this paradigm, undeveloped nature is not as valuable as developed civilization and its artifacts. This devaluing of nature undergirds the conflict between natural ecosystems and civilized ecosystems.

In contrast, ancestral hunting and gathering economies appear to have been—and continue to be—much more abundance-oriented economies, which reflect the dynamics of natural ecosystems. This is not to say that there is no sense of abundance in modern economies, nor is it to say that scarcity never occurs in ancestral economies or natural ecosystems. Rather, I am suggesting that our modern global economy tends to confer value on that which is scarce, whereas ancestral economies tend to confer value on that which is abundant.

In modern societies, value is constructed in terms of scarcity in the following way. If something is scarce and useful, then it is highly valued as a trade item. If something is abundant and useful, then it is not highly valued as a trade item. For example, in the labor market, if one has a skill that is scarce and useful (CEO, world-class athlete), that skill is highly valued and traded for other items of high value (money and stock). On the other hand, if one's skill is perceived to be abundantly possessed in the population (child care, unskilled labor), then it is not valued highly for trade, and is traded for items of low value (minimum wage, at best).

2. Can both scarcity and abundance be highly valued?

Yes. In ancestral societies, value is constructed in the following way. If something is scarce and useful, then its value symbolizes one of the special strengths of the tribe–a rare gift of nature to be protected for the good of the tribe. As an example, an eagle feather is rare to Northwest Native Americans, therefore it is protected for sacred rituals, and its possession symbolizes strength, conferring value on the entire tribe. On the other hand, if something is abundant and useful, then it is also considered sacred and highly valued highly, to be shared throughout the community, as an abundant gift of nature that sustains the tribe, ensuring its long-term survival. As an example, salmon was historically abundant to Northwest Native Americans and continues to be understood as a sacred gift of nature's abundance when stocks are numerous. A strong salmon run symbolizes ecosystem and tribal health. The much weaker salmon runs today reflect ecosystem and tribal sickness.

3. What is the contrast between today's monetized economies and ancestral gift economies?

The contrast between modern and ancestral societies appears to be the same as the difference between monetized economies and gift economies. In monetized economies, scarcity is most valued and in gift economies, abundance is most valued. Certainly, modern societies have some gift activities: holiday giving and inheritance. And ancestral societies have some trade activities. However, trade dominates value generation in modern societies and gifts dominate value generation in ancestral societies

Interestingly, both conceptions of value collide in certain contemporary issues. In the timber/ancient forest crisis, trees, as timber, are seen as trade items whose value increases through scarcity and decreases by abundance. Whereas trees, as ancient forests, are seen as gifts whose value decreases by

scarcity and increases by abundance. In the labor market, childcare, as a trade item, has low value in abundance–whereas childcare, as a crucially important community-strengthening gift, has high value in abundance.

4. Does it matter if the gift economies of indigenous/ancestral people are more natural?

On the view of evolutionary mutual aid, it appears that gift economies are more natural than monetized economies, and are therefore more in harmony with ecosystem health, safety and community. On the other hand, it seems that monetized economies are more artificial and are in disharmony with ecosystem health, safety and community. Another way of characterizing this disharmony is to say that monetized economies help generate violence against nature.

5. How do monetized economies generate violence towards nature?

To support this contention, we must first look at how gift economies are natural. In a natural ecosystem, each species depends on the diverse web of life that connects them (also known as "mutual aid"). In this way, each species both gives to the ecosystem and receives from the ecosystem. If a species is abundant, then its abundance generates a gift of fertility to the entire system. A rich salmon run provides fertility to the river ecosystem and to any life that feeds on the salmon.

However, if one species begins to dominate an ecosystem, it can undermine the diversity of the ecosystem. In island ecosystems, this sort of single-species domination occasionally occurs, and an unhealthy ecosystem, lacking in diversity, devolves. This kind of anti-diversity violence can occur in island ecosystems, but it is generally restricted to small, marginalized ecosystems. It seems that the general case in nature is to preserve diversity by mutual aid, through the gifts of abundance. In island ecosystems, anti-diversity violence, in the form of over-predation, has a tendency to rebalance itself through mutual aid.

An example such rebalancing was the overpopulation of invasive rabbits on San Juan Island that led to predation and disease, so that the rabbit population was reduced to sustainable levels, though as an invasive species (introduced by farmers), rabbits might continue to pose a threat to the island ecosystem. Similarly, invasive mountain goats are being removed from the Olympic National Forest, and relocated to the Mt. Rainier National Forest, where they are native because they are a threat to the natural ecosystems found in the Olympic National Forest.

The key ecological principle is that species diversity and mutual aid keeps the ecosystem in balance, so that one species is not allowed to dominate and reduce the health of the ecosystem. This makes one wonder about the health of the planet's ecosystem, now that human beings have dominated so many regional ecosystems.

6. In what other ways do monetized economies generate violence?

Monetized economies are artificial and anti-natural in the following way. Species diversity can only occur in a natural ecosystem that has abundant resources. If those resources become scarce, then species diversity is destroyed and ecosystem health is marginalized. Monetized economies extract abundant resources because they are cheap and transform them into scarcer, useful products that are more valuable. This creates the win-win trade sequence of capitalism where both the extraction of abundant resources and the synthesis of scarce products create seemingly endless profit. However, it is just this profit taking that generates the depletion of ecosystem health. This certainly seems like a kind of violence toward the ecosystem, which in turn is a kind of violence toward life on this planet.

In human resource communities, monetized economies also generate violence in being anti-community, and encouraging a view of human flourishing that is adversarial and that marginalizes populations without access to sustainable resources. Abundant labor supplies are extracted because they are cheap and are used to transform resources into privately owned, scarcer products that are more valuable for trade. This creates the trade sequence of capitalism where the extraction of cheap and abundant labor resources and the synthesis of scarce products create surplus value or profit. However, it is just this profit taking that generates the depletion of community health. This can be considered violence toward the community because it devalues abundant labor simply because it is abundant. Often labor is so abundant that it is worthless–unemployment underscores this worthlessness. When people, or populations, are considered worthless, then they are shamed, angry, hostile, and potentially violent.

7. How can we improve the planet's ecosystems, given the disharmony between natural and artificial ecosystems?

The violence and disharmony between human-centered ecosystems and natural ecosystems must be dramatically reduced. It should be obvious that runaway greenhouse gases, climate change, pollution, species extinction, and destroyed natural ecosystems signal an impending catastrophic change for life on earth. Humans have created an unsustainable, artificial psycho-social-economic ecosystem which is clearly not compatible with the way that natural ecosystems function. We must find a way to realign our way of life with the way that nature has thrived for millennia upon millennia. Economically, I suggest that we question the anti-nature characteristics of commodity capitalism that not only threaten global ecosystems, but undermine the dignity, integrity, autonomy, and security of human beings, even as it tries to sell us on the grandeur of modernity and consumerism.

8. Where do we start this "realignment with natural ecosystems"?

For me, I believe that traditional indigenous/ancestral societies/tribe/bands offer insight into ways to

realign ourselves with nature. Unfortunately, these societies have often needed to adapt to commodity capitalism to such a degree that they have lost some of their own connection to natural ecosystems.

I once talked with a Native woman, who worked with Native and non-Native communities to help them maintain sustainable forests. She was disheartened to find that Natives have often been pushed to put their forests at dire risk by over cutting trees on slopes that will be hard to replant.

We can also find ways to realign dominant culture to nature through the ecological sciences, whose premise is that only natural ecosystem principles are truly sustainable.

9. How can we learn from traditional Native and ancestral economies, as well as recommendations from environmental science?

We can learn from the cultural and academic resources offered by indigenous/ancestral history, philosophy, and practices. As an example, in some Northwest Native American tribes, the potlatch is a gift-giving ritual that takes personal wealth and transforms it into social wealth. It is just this spirit of giving that can help regenerate ecosystem diversity, community safety, and social health. Also, most colleges and universities have environmental studies programs, and there are libraries that offer helpful texts on sustainability and ecosystem realignment.

10. What are the objections to the analysis that I have just given?

Perhaps, the most obvious objection to what I am suggesting about abundance, scarcity and violence is that all economies and ecologies as well, fall on a continuum between abundance and scarcity, trading and gifting. Indigenous tribes regularly deforested the Willamette Valley through controlled fires, so that they could hunt more easily. Northwest tribes also traded extensively with other, sometimes quite distant, tribes. Modern societies, such as the USA, give massive amounts of foreign and humanitarian aid. Ecosystems transition through cycles of natural abundance and scarcity, with no obvious bias toward one or the other. Species react quite differently in those different contexts. Whole cultures can be conditioned in quite contrasting ways because of the pattern nature imposes on habitat.

My initial response to this objection is that either my theory fits the data or it does not fit the data. This confirmation or disconfirmation requires a good bit of research and study. On the other hand, we can speculate about the goodness of abundance and the evil of scarcity, without considering all of the data. We can also critique the health of economies and ecosystems in terms of the role of scarcity and abundance. It is in this manner that a broad analysis can be useful. However, any theoretical work, of this sort, must face the context of historical fact. So, objections based on the facts of the matter must always be respected.

11. Did Adam Smith suggest that capitalism is a win/win exchange?

As Adam Smith pointed out, trade between equals is a win-win for both buyer and seller. He suggested that buyers value the product they buy more than the amount of money they spend. Likewise, sellers value the money they are given more than the product they sell. Another way of putting this is that buyers find that the product they buy is more useful than keeping the money they spend; and sellers find the money more useful than the product they sell. Presumably, the buyer has money to spend, and the seller has products to sell. So, this arrangement is tidy and beneficial, and the hallmark of original ideas about capitalism. Unfortunately, the "trade between equals" idea is not the case now, and even Adam Smith had worries about it when he was writing because working class labor does not have enough money to spend (and must borrow from banks), and the wealthy have many products to sell through the financial, ownership, resource, product, and service markets that they own and control. What started as an idea of a win-win economy has devolved into a win-win for the rich and a lose-lose for the poor, with a layer of financial insecurity for all who must live within commodity capitalism.

Further Questions:

1. To what degree are gifts and nonmonetary trade current alternatives to our monetized economy?

2. How do people become so commodified that they need to constantly sell themselves to others or to dominate and demonize others?

3. How is money an oppressive amorality?

4. What if we only needed money for luxuries, and all necessities were free?

5. What economies are based on renewable cycles and relationships?

Part Two: Class Conflicts and Economic Justice

Readings:

Scott, J., & Leonhardt, D. (2005). Shadowy lines that still divide. *The New York*.

Chart: "Hidden Rules Among Classes" by Ruby Payne, A Framework for Understanding Poverty, 1996 (Online site for this course)

Key Dilemma of Part Two:

Given human nature, as we know it, is economic justice possible, and can class conflicts be resolved?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

Across the U.S., Native Americans have turned to gambling casinos to fund the needs of tribal members. Since tribes own their land in common, banks and outside investors cannot mortgage tribal land as collateral. Therefore, banks and investors are only willing to invest in casinos because they assure massive financial returns, making collateral unnecessary. Tribes know that casinos contribute to the rich investors getting richer, gambling addictions, and indebtedness amongst the poor, but their tribal interests are paramount in their minds. Does this suggest that human nature is somewhat resistant to economic justice?

Glossary:

Market Value: This value is determined by the principle of supply and demand. If demand exceeds supply, then market value increases; if supply exceeds demand, then market value decreases.

Questions:

1. How can we address class conflicts to achieve economic justice?

In the news during 2010, we learned that Goldman Sacks, an investment firm, seemed to have been running a gambling casino on top of our economy. Through a kind of wagering, the firm, and its wealthy investors, benefited hugely as the economy tanked—even betting against the interests of their investors. The original intent of the stock market was to generate needed capital for the expansion of productive elements of our economy. Relatively recently, financial "instruments" have been created that are geared to simply increase the wealth of the already wealthy. As conflict resolvers, we want to resist demonizing the wealthy or their handlers, but we also want to offer a conflict analysis of the widening gap between Main Street and Wall Street.

First, it is important to remember that the mainstream global economy centers around one central value: market value. Advertising increases demand, and supplies can be restricted; by doing both, those in control of advertising and the restriction of supplies control the means to increased market value—and therefore, wealth. This scheme works well for the creation of wealth for those in control of advertising and supplies, but it also concentrates wealth in the hands of a small elite. It also increases the gap between the rich and the poor. It is important to understand that, even though our mainstream economy is based on *public* participation, the wealth that is generated is *private*. Therefore, the public generates private wealth, and wealth gets concentrated into the hands of the few. If economic justice depends on returning publicly produced wealth to the public, we currently live in a state of economic injustice. How we recreate the economy to return publicly produced wealth to the public is a conflict that must be addressed in nonviolent conflict processes, if at all possible.

Second, it is also important to remember that it is an extreme idea to place so much of our lives into the marketplace. The ethos of tax reduction and privatization is to eliminate public services and replace them with private and competitive services. In other words, public necessities become marketplace purchases, rather than entitlements. The public good becomes an opportunity for private profit, not a social responsibility. This notion is extreme because it rejects any balance between the public and private sectors. It also minimizes the role of wealth redistribution and debt forgiveness as elements of economic justice.

In our culture, we have we have tax-generated government programs and private charities rather than economic justice. Interestingly, both of these institutions tend to fund the wealthy or the middle class. Low- or no-income people are often the least served by these programs. Witness the rising homeless rate, affordable housing shortage, and decaying low-income neighborhoods, while billions of tax dollars are siphoned to military contractors and other private contractors to government agencies.

Union and leftist organizing in the 1930s helped to fashion Roosevelt's New Deal that followed. The more recent Occupy Movement has put the wealth divide into the public consciousness. Further progress for economic justice will require larger mass movements, legislative action, and public dialogue, so that wealth redistribution becomes a household word, as well as a homeless camp demand.

Economic conflicts take many forms. In the following, we will consider the conflicts that occur between and among the traditional economic classes, working, middle, and upper. However, I will relabel them to reflect the different experiences, rather than the traditional abstract labels:

Struggles of Survival (SOS)

Over-Stressed (OS)

High Anxiety (HA)

2. How does CR have a middle-class bias?

> I think that **CR suffers from OS biases in mediations with SOS**. Because SOS people are often engaged in transgenerational struggles for survival, they may be emotionally explosive, conflict avoidant, storytellers, who often resort to leveraging their conflict positions to win, avoiding their sense that their lives are on a losing streak. This modus operandi runs counter to OS sensibilities of transparent interests and civil dialogue. OS experiences SOS conflict as another stressor in their stressed lives. Whereas, SOS experiences OS conflict as another entrapment game that the privileged play to win fights.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is the "wealth gap" also a "wealth gumby," stretching incomes across a wider and wider height, enriching few, and making more people financially insecure?

2. How are class labels both abstract and experiential?

3. How can navigating difference address the wealth divide?

Chapter Six: Navigating Forgiveness and Atonement

Part One: Forgiveness and Atonement: Role in Interpersonal Justice

Key Dilemma for Part One:

- Who decides when forgiveness is justified, and how much is necessary?
- Who decides when atonement is necessary, and how much is necessary?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

When I make mistakes, I get mad at myself. When I make a series of mistakes, or make the same mistake more than once, I get even madder at myself. I am not very self-forgiving. Shouldn't I have more hope in myself? Shouldn't I welcome myself back into my own intrapersonal community, where the side of me that is unforgiving can forgive the side of me that committed a wrong? Shouldn't the self that is mad reconcile with the self that made mistakes—creating a peaceful whole?

I have a friend that forgives himself quickly and frequently. The problem with my friend's forgiveness is that he starts out getting mad at himself, but he quickly forgives himself, and never makes important changes to his behavior. He does not give up his addictions, nor get effective help. He does not stay mad at himself, and he is at peace with who he is and what he does. He lives in a permissive intrapersonal community. He is a community consisting of one permissive person forgiving himself too easily. This is individualism that denies true community, where wrongs are buried deep within one's psyche.

Introduction:

Given that many people believe that when it comes to either interpersonal justice or social justice, forgiveness is impossible because it is unthinkable to forgive a wrong that has left an individual or group injured, traumatized, and irretrievably stuck in the past. Also, for many people, atonement is impossible because it is unthinkable to accept the full responsibility for creating such a grievous harm that goes

beyond an injury, into trauma, and a kind of emotional paralysis. In this context, retributive justice is often sought by individual victims or groups of people who have suffered grievously. Victims want their perpetrator to suffer because they are beyond redemption.

Forgiveness Defined:

A key difficulty in defining it is that it seems to be something beyond justification. If it was justified in every case, then it would merely be mercy, something that is pardoned on the basis of some evidence. Forgiveness goes beyond *mercy* and a *pardon*. And it is not merely *letting go* of something. Forgiveness seems to have an element of hope in it, hope for the moral improvement of the forgiven. Forgiveness also seems to have a *welcoming* element in it, the belief in bringing the unforgiven back into community through forgiveness. Hope and welcoming can heal individuals and communities. On this view, forgiving is a kind of healing.

The worry that I have about this view of forgiveness arises from the extreme form of individualism that Euro-American society represents. When individualism dominates, community suffers. If there is no community to welcome people into, we lose a key way that forgiveness heals. If forgiveness cannot heal, then it has lost its power. If it has lost its power, then it can transform into a kind of permissiveness.

Permissiveness is a feature of a community that has lost it moral strength and moral solidarity. On my view, morality is a feature reflected back and forth between our *interpersonal* community and our *intrapersonal* community—the community outside of us and inside of each of us. These communities mirror each other. When community morality is weak, then each individual's morality has lost an important mooring. Just as our identity depends on healthy relationships, morality also depends on community health.

If poverty rages in a society where wealth is also evident, and that wealth is often generated at the expense of the middle class and the poor, then how can we expect individual morality to be strong? If we permit our society to have extremes of wealth that depend on poverty, we are permitting the wealthy to base their security on the lack of security for others. This sort of permissiveness creates a predator society, with predatory individuals. Those who believe that the poor will always be with us ensure that the wealth divide will always exist, that we will continue to have dislocated communities, and that our wider culture's morality will be further degraded.

Sometimes punishment can be transformative, and sometimes atonement can be transformative; how do we know which one will work in a specific case?

As conflict facilitators, we are trying to use conflict and difference to create transformative resolutions that build community and strengthen morality. Can we do this in a society that is structured on reducing

community and weakening morality? My worry is that conflict processes are not enough. To be more than a band-aid, conflict facilitation must occur within the context of community builders who are fully aware of the social dynamic that is tearing community apart—fully aware of the social dynamic that is tearing the moral fabric apart.

I ask myself if these reflections are helping me be less mad at myself for my mistakes. Within contemporary mainstream U.S. society, can I be more forgiving towards myself? Given what I have written here, I am concluding that I should be more forgiving of my mistakes if their moral weight is relatively light. On the other hand, I should be less forgiving if their moral weight is heavy. And, it should not be just up to me to determine the moral weight of my mistakes. I must determine the moral weight of my mistakes through dialogue with others. But, as members of this society, we are infected with suspicious moral reasoning because of the corruption of our sense of community. Can we transcend our individualism and our exposure to moral decline of mainstream culture to find authentic moral values? I think we can, but that will take powerful commitment to social, economic, and environmental justice.

Retributive and Restorative Justice: We need to consider ways that retributive justice often **falls short** of starting the healing process necessary for positive personal or social change. And to consider ways that restorative justice is capable of generating a significant amount of positive interpersonal and social change. Where retributive justice is about punishment, and is not directly about forgiveness and atonement (though it can occur as part of the courtroom process), restorative justice is centered on the dynamics of forgiveness and atonement.

To create a space for effective interpersonal restorative justice processes, I suggest that we map out these concepts along continua, to help victims move from absolute unforgiveness to at least slightly less unforgiveness, not to fully forgive, but to be less stuck in unforgiveness. Likewise, the processes of restorative justice are intended to convince perpetrators to begin the process of atonement, by creating a space, along a continuum, to at least help them begin taking some responsibility for their abuse or harm to another. This is what I mean by navigating spaces on the continua of forgiveness and atonement, as opposed to not being able to move, because it is so easy to get stuck at the polar ends, not knowing there is space for a wider continuum.

Similarly, to create a space for effective social restorative processes, I suggest that we use the same continua-approach to forgiveness and atonement, outlined above. However, with social injustice issues, we need to construct opportunities for members of perpetrator social groups and members of victimized social groups to meet and map out ways that oppressive social groups can begin to find ways to atone, without believing that small atonement gestures, though important, constitute full atonement. And after trust can be established, victim groups can move from unforgiveness to less unforgiveness.

It is crucial to remember that full atonement and full forgiveness are multigenerational projects, just as transgenerational transmission of trauma takes many generations to heal.

What is the role of atonement and forgiveness in interpersonal restorative justice?

Justice, as understood as paying the price of misdeeds has, in many modern cultures, entailed going to jail, prison, or paying fines. One pays with the loss of freedom, or money, or both. This view of justice is individualistic in the sense that our justice system assumes that those convicted of crimes had complete autonomy, and therefore full responsible for their actions, admitting to few mitigating circumstances. These are the underpinnings of retributive justice.

Sociologically, these underpinnings are challenged by the dynamics of peer identification and pressure that have so much influence on what people think and choose to do. This is not to say that people don't make bad choices, it is only to say that many people feel that they do not have much choice because peer identification and pressure do not allow for much choice. If they make too many choices for which their peers disapprove, they may be shunned by that group.

Shunning is an ancient practice of maintaining peer group identification, beliefs, and practices. Just as ancient indigenous people shunned those who broke the taboos of the tribe, we shun those who break the taboos of our family, friends, and coworkers.

For many people—rich or poor—crime, or other misdeeds, are viewed as survival skills in a challenging world. Peer groups determine what behaviors are necessary for the group's survival. Some of those behaviors may be criminal, but are deemed survival skills for certain groups, whether they are investment brokers, entrepreneurs, or corporate strategists at one end of the wealth spectrum, or gangsters and rip-off artists at the other end of the wealth spectrum. In the middle of the spectrum are the myriads of people who cheat on their taxes, break motor vehicle laws, or avoid building permits for remodeling their homes, etc.

It may sound odd to suppose that everyone is living on a survival level. True, some people's wealth means that they are not vulnerable in terms of physical survival, though modern society certainly has health, crime, and accident risks. More importantly, people worry about peer group survival; who would they be if their peers rejected them—at home, community, or workplace? Social isolation is potentially lethal in that social acceptance and networking are important aspects of well-being. To survive socially and economically, we must abide by peer group standards and expectations. Those standards and expectations can include dishonesty and crime.

If viewed through the sociological lens, what does this say about individual responsibility, culpability, and the need for punishment?

Gould Essay: What are the five forgiveness assessments recommended for conflict resolution processes?

Forgiveness can mean quite different things to different people, and people behave quite differently depending on what forgiveness means to them in particular cases. Because of this diversity of meaning and behavior, conflict resolution processes face the challenge of accommodating these differences in such a way that the processes fit participants' sense of forgiveness, without unreflectively forcing participants into processes that presume an overly simplistic definition of forgiveness. In this paper, I examine five different continua of meaning and behavior:

Turning-point to incremental forgiveness;

Proactive to reactive forgiveness;

Transactional to non-transactional forgiveness;

High risk to low-risk forgiveness;

Forgiveness-resistant to overly-forgiving people.

After this examination, I suggest how these continua affect current conflict resolution practice, and I also suggest how certain modifications to practice can better accommodate differences of forgiveness meanings and behavior.

Forgiveness is an issue in a wide array of conflict resolution processes when one, some, or all of the parties feel victimized—and out of that sense of victimization, the need to have an apology and the need to forgive can arise. Forgiveness obviously has a place in reconciliation and restorative justice processes because at least one party has clearly been wronged. However, forgiveness also has a role in many simple neighbor-to-neighbor disputes involving relatively minor issues, such as noise or shared fencing, when at least one party feels they are the victim of, at least, rude behavior.

The motivation for writing this paper is to help disentangle conflicting perceptions about forgiveness. Because forgiveness means different things to different people, we find that this key element of conflict resolution is extraordinarily difficult to define. The challenge of this paper is how conflict resolution processes can be sensitive to this diversity of meanings, and be capable of blending them into a fair and meaningful process. The need for this paper arises from a concern that if conflict resolution processes are not mindful of the various dilemmas concerning forgiveness, then participants might find themselves swept along in a process they find fundamentally unfair and insensitive.

Since forgiveness often plays such a strong role within conflict resolution processes, it is important for

those who facilitate these processes to understand that participants enter these processes with radically different understandings of the meaning and role of forgiveness within their individual lives. Some understand forgiveness to be an all or nothing action—we either forgive or not. Others understand forgiveness on a continuum somewhere in between the extremes of absolute unforgiveness to complete forgiveness. Some forgive because it is a lifelong virtue or a religious requirement. Others are prepared to forgive only if it is justified within an exchange for an apology, or a way of reconceiving the offender as deserving a release from punishment or resentment. Some people forgive because of its capacity for self-healing. Others forgive for its capacity to help heal and transform the offender. Some forgive as a way to build community, as well as address social evils and morally transform those shaped by those evils. Others forgive only when the offense was a result of an intentional choice. Some people cannot forgive because it is a threat to their pride—others forgive too easily because if flows from their servility. Some forgive only in low-risk situations when it seems likely to be a successful means to an end. Others forgive even is high-risk situations because it is a life-guiding principle to be practiced regardless of risk.

To further complicate this problem, forgiveness may not be as simple as following from a goal, principle or a personality trait, as above. Some people find they are deeply conflicted about forgiveness because there are other values, feelings or worries that compel, oppose or mitigate its use.

It is not surprising for a mediator to encounter a victim presenting the following dilemmas during a caucus: “Forgiveness is too big a risk for me.” “I can only forgive a little bit, but never as much as he wants.” “I would be happy to forgive him, if only he would apologize.” Or, “I feel like my pastor wants me to forgive, but I feel like I’m not holding my spouse accountable.” Or, “I know it would be easier on me if I just forgave him, but it just doesn’t seem right to let him off the hook.” Or, “I shouldn’t be so angry with her, she is only a victim of a larger unfair system—but I continue to be furious with her.” Or, “I know I should forgive, but I can’t because I would be lowering myself to his level—I’ve worked hard to feel good about myself.” Or, “I probably shouldn’t be so forgiving, but I’m happy to forgive because I’m in no position to demand any respect from this person.” Each one of these responses suggest quite different internal conflicts about forgiving that, in turn, can have a profound influence on conflict resolution processes.

Forgiveness in Conflict Resolution Assessments

At this point, it is important to remind the reader that the five dimensions of forgiveness being discussed here represent five different directions for our consideration—no two directions can be reduced or collapsed into each other. Each of these directions imply different sorts of assessments within conflict resolution processes. In the following, I outline how these assessments function; later, I will elaborate each of these assessments in greater detail. Immediately below, I diagram the five dimensions of forgiveness addressed by these assessments.

1. Turning-Point Forgiveness————————————————————Incremental Forgiveness

2. Proactive Forgiveness————————————————————————-Reactive Forgiveness

3. Transactional Forgiveness————————————————Non-Transactional Forgiveness

4. High-Risk Forgiveness————————————————- ————————Low-Risk Forgiveness

5. Forgiveness Resistant ——Forgiveness from Healthy Self-Respect—— Overly Forgiving

Turning Point/Incremental Forgiveness Assessment: Conflict resolvers need to assess where victims views of forgiveness fit on the continuum between the extremes of turning-point forgiveness (where one shifts from unforgiveness to full forgiveness) and incremental forgiveness (where one move slowly away from unforgiveness through incremental steps of forgiveness. Those in the middle of this continuum may see the value of both turning point and incremental forgiveness, depending on the situation.

Proactive/ Reactive Assessment: This next assessment requires that conflict resolvers examine where victims views of forgiveness fit on the proactive and reactive forgiveness continuum. Proactive forgivers tend to view forgiveness as community reconciliation and support for moral improvement. Whereas, reactive forgivers tend to view forgiveness as one of many responses to injustice and victimization. Those in the middle of this continuum hold both of these values to varying degrees.

Transactional/Non-Transactional Assessment: This assessment involves the determination of where victim's views of forgiveness fall on the transactional/non-transactional forgiveness continuum. Those tending toward the transactional understand forgiveness as a transaction between victim and offender. Those tending toward non-transactional forgiveness understand forgiveness as a personal healing process that does not require an engagement with the offender. Those in the middle of this continuum hold both values to varying degrees, depending on the situation.

High-Risk and Low-Risk Assessment: Victims who understand forgiveness as a lifelong principle are likely to take risks forgiving, even in seemingly unreasonable situations. Victims who do not want to forgive without a high level of justification do not tend to understand forgiveness as a lifelong commitment, but rather as a practice limited to low-risk situations. Those in the middle of this continuum will forgive in low- to moderate-risk situations, but avoid high-risk forgiving.

Forgiveness-Resistant/Overly-Forgiving Assessment: Forgiveness-resistant or prideful victims resist forgiveness because it is perceived as lowering the victim to the level of the offender. Overly forgiving or servile victims forgive too easily because they perceive the offender as having a higher or intimidating

status. Those in the middle of this continuum have a healthy amount of self-respect, neither too inflated, nor too deflated.

As can be seen above, each of these assessments engage forgiveness in a different way. Victims' views of, and dispositions toward, forgiveness pull them in at least these five directions. Being pulled in these different directions creates conflicts for victims that must be sensitively handled by conflict resolvers. Otherwise, victims will view conflict resolution processes as a bad match with their values and/or their temperaments.

Now I turn to a more detailed account of the ten poles of these five dimensions. In the first dimension, people who tend toward a notion of turning-point forgiveness understand a forgiveness process as trying to achieve this turning point. Flanigan describes forgiveness as a turning point in the following way:

Forgiveness is the accomplishment of mastery over a wound. It is the process through which an injured person first fights off, then embraces, then conquers a situation that has nearly destroyed him. Forgiveness is also a gift given to the self. Once received, the gift of forgiveness releases an injured person from the burdens and shackles of hate. In a way, forgiveness is only for the brave. It is for those people who are willing to confront their pain, accept themselves as permanently changed, and make difficult choices. (p. 71)

Shriver also characterizes forgiveness as a turning point: "Forgiveness begins when victims abandon revenge and perpetrators abandon professions of innocence." (p. 156) People on this side of the continuum may have concerns like: Do I have enough justification to turn toward complete forgiveness? Do I have a duty to completely forgive? Must I forgive all at once?

On the other hand, those who tend toward incremental forgiveness understand forgiveness work as helping them gradually move along the continuum toward being a bit more forgiving, without the commitment to completely forgive. The concerns of this group may revolve around questions like: Have I gone far enough toward forgiveness? Have I gone too far in my forgiveness? Has my level of forgiveness done anyone any good? Do I have an obligation to forgive more than I have?

In the second dimension, people who tend towards reactive forgiveness have the prime consideration of how one should respond to an injustice. Dillon explains forgiveness as a temperamental reactivity as follows:

As a laminate kitchen countertop is forgiving, while granite is unforgiving—a dropped glass might bounce on the former but will shatter on the latter—so one can be a forgiving person, of oneself or of others: less likely to condemn in the first place and so less likely to need to overcome it. (p. 72)

People on this side of the continuum might have questions like: Is forgiveness too passive in the face of injustice? Are there limits to retribution? Will forgiveness undermine accountability? Should one forgive what one cannot see punished? Should one forgive because it is a religious requirement? For these people, reactive forgiveness is defined as a measured forgoing of a response to wrongdoing that is hostile, resentful, angry, vindictive, or punitive. For reactive forgivers, forgiveness must be justified by some way to reconceive the offender as deserving forgiveness.

Those who tend towards proactive forgiveness see that they have a duty to reach out to others and forgive. Their considerations might revolve around the following: Will my forgiveness help recreate a sense of community? Will my forgiveness stimulate a kind of renewal that we give to ourselves, as well as offenders? Will my forgiveness motivate the offender's ethical self-discipline by a release from the negative aspects of punishment, resentment, and clinging to the past?

In the third dimension, people who tend to understand forgiveness as a transaction see the need to interact with the offender. Shriver describes the transaction of forgiveness as follows: "Interchanges of forbearance, repentance, and truth-telling advance a process of forgiveness when they produce new empathy between former enemies." (p. 160) Those on this side of the continuum may have worries like: Am I justified in forgiving? Is her apology sincere? Am I ready to forgive?

On the other hand, people who tend to understand forgiveness as non-transactional do not see the need to interact with the offender. Benn describes the non-transaction of forgiveness as follows: "Repentance is not a requirement for forgiveness, as forgiveness doesn't entail the restoration of relationships." (p. 373) People on this side of the continuum may have the following concerns: What if my forgiveness does not feel like it is helping me heal? What if my forgiveness does not appear to help the offender heal or become a better person?

In the fourth dimension, people, who forgive even in high-risk circumstances, occupy one end of a continuum. They tend to see forgiveness as a lifelong principle, whose goodness is not undermined by being risky or hard to justify. Bishop Tutu describes the risk-taking aspect of forgiveness as follows:

We have been blessed with leaders who were ready to take risks—when you embark on the business of asking for and granting forgiveness, you are taking a risk. In relations between individuals, if you ask another person for forgiveness you may be spurned; the one you have injured may refuse to forgive you. The risk is even greater if you are the injured party, wanting to offer forgiveness. The culprit may be arrogant, obdurate, or blind; not ready or willing to apologize or to ask for forgiveness. (p. 269)

Gregory L. Jones places this risk-taking dimension within the Christian context:

> Christian forgiveness involves a high cost, both for God and for those who embody it. It requires the disciplines

> of dying and rising with Christ, disciplines for which there are no shortcuts, no handy techniques to replace the risk and vulnerability of giving up 'possession' of one's self, which is done through the practices of forgiveness and repentance. (p. 5)

However, those on this side of the continuum may have questions like: Am I going to be perceived as servile if I forgive in an unjustifiable situation? Should I balance my principle with more concern for the consequences of my action?

On the other end of the continuum, people lean toward taking the least amount of risk in forgiving by demanding the strongest justification. Calhoun describes this reduction of risk as follows: "Repentance makes forgiveness risk-free and rational." (p. 62) Those on this side of the continuum might have the following worries: Am I going to be perceived as hard-hearted or prideful in my reluctance to forgive without adequate justification? Why am I not willing to take more risks on an offender's moral improvement?

In the fifth dimension, those who tend toward being forgiveness-resistant might have the following worries: Won't my forgiveness make me vulnerable? How can I live with myself if I let this offense go? On the other hand, those who tend toward being overly-forgiving have a different set of concerns: How can I demand justice when I am hardly a perfect person? Won't forgiveness be easier on everyone?

Hopeful Future Orientation of Forgiveness

Given all of the questions that I have raised about the uncertainties concerning forgiving, it is important to observe that, in addition to quite natural values conflicts, these uncertainties are largely a function of the hopeful future orientation of forgiveness. In serious offenses, where a perpetrator may offend again, uncertainty arises because we have no way to predict whether the future will confirm the hopes that we have when we forgive. Forgiveness is hopeful future-oriented, even as it is intended to come to grips with the past. For people who feel their forgiveness needs to be fully justified, they are sobered by the observation that only a partial justification can be achieved through the evidence of a perpetrator's apology, remorse, restitution, or commitment to moral improvement. Only a partial justification can be achieved because forgiveness can never be fully justified when the goodness that comes from it, to a large extent, depends on some, currently inaccessible, future healing, moral improvement or transformation.

In contrast, punishment does not entail this future-contingent risk. When the evidence is sufficiently convincing to show that one has done the crime, then the law determines that one must do the time. The determination of a punishment is justified by evidence that can be examined. Even mercy can be justified by the evidence of the measure of suffering experienced by the perpetrator or his family. There

is no such available evidence for the goodness that might come from forgiveness because that goodness is necessarily in the future, where it cannot be examined—it can only be hoped for.

Given the hopeful future-orientation of forgiveness, one's consideration of forgiveness must necessarily be mapped onto a context of personal and social vulnerability. Such vulnerability arises from the risk, entailed in forgiveness, that it will perceived by an offender as permission to continue offending, rather than an opportunity for a fresh start with a renewed sense of moral improvement. This risk has both personal and social dimensions in that both the victim and society are vulnerable.

The hopeful future orientation of forgiveness means that, in certain cases, we forgive with the faith that it will be for the good, regardless of the lack of evidence to support it, and regardless of the personal and social vulnerability that forgiveness can create. The vulnerability involved in the future efficacy of forgiveness can be mitigated by the justifying power of one's faith, one's sense of human perfectibility, and the power of goodness itself. On this account, an extraordinarily strong faith is required to make a leap towards forgiveness when there is insufficient evidence to support that leap and when it entails significant personal and/or social vulnerability.

Interestingly, one considering such forgiveness is pulled in three different directions: Does the evidence justify a leap towards forgiveness? Is the risk low enough to make a leap towards forgiveness justifiable? Is my faith strong enough for such a leap towards forgiveness? There will certainly be times when the evidence is so insufficient or contrary, and the personal and social risks are too high, to support forgiveness that it would seem foolish to forgive. There will be other times when the strength of one's faith overcomes these worries, and the results are seemingly miraculous. However, judging the efficacy of forgiveness on its positive consequences alone may be missing the point of forgiveness.

It may be that forgiveness offers hope in the future, regardless if that hope is realized in positive consequences.

Forgiveness may be divine precisely because if offers hope without the guarantee of good consequences, with the risk that it may be perceived as permission or license. However, we must be mindful of the cases where forgiveness facilitates unending, inescapably hopeless, patterns of abuse and oppression. We might answer this concern by suggesting that such "forgiveness" is not really hope-filled forgiveness because such "forgiveness" denies the victim's hope. (Ryan) Therefore, the hopeful future orientation of forgiveness requires that our forgiveness be committed to a future that affirms the hopes of both victim and perpetrator and, in turn, also commits us to a future free of all hopeless patterns of abuse and oppression. Our faith in hope-filled forgiveness is also our faith in a possible world free of hope-destroying patterns of abuse and oppression.

The Forgiveness Commitments Common to Conflict Resolution Practice

Furthering our concern for being sensitive to the function of forgiveness within conflict resolution processes, it is important to observe that conflict resolution processes, themselves, tend to embody turning point, proactive and transactional forgiveness, and may be guilty of exploiting tendencies toward being overly forgiving and overly risk-taking. I am suggesting that conflict resolution processes are not necessarily neutral in these five dimensions.

Let me explain. First, conflict resolution process, such as reconciliation and victim-offender reconciliation, tend to orchestrate a turning point between parties on the basis of a dramatic sense of forgiveness. Victims, whose sense of forgiveness is more incremental, may find themselves uncomfortably pulled into the drama of a fuller forgiveness. The unsettling gravity of this kind of drama is illustrated by South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where some victims were re-traumatized by the process. (Stein, et al)

Second, conflict resolution processes are proactive because the existence of these processes asserts the importance of actively resolving conflict by entering a dialogic process, as opposed to passively letting some third party determine a conflict's outcome. This pro-activity toward conflict can easily entail pro-activity toward forgiveness—believing that forgiveness helps recreate community, stimulate renewal, and motivate an offender's ethical self-discipline.

Thirdly, conflict resolution processes are also transactional because they are necessarily relational; they engage disputants in dialogue, not keeping them privately disengaged. This bias toward addressing conflict relationally easily translates to encouraging relational forgiveness. Conflict resolution processes may seem optional for people who believe more in the notion of non-relational forgiveness. As an example, they may have already forgiven their perpetrator, so why enter a dialogic process? From these considerations, the relational activism inherent within conflict resolution processes assures some degree of bias toward being both proactively and transactionally forgiving.

Fourth, the momentum toward forgiveness, created by the pro-activity and relationality of conflict resolution processes (detailed above), easily creates an expectation that forgiveness is necessary for resolution. Within this context, disputants or victims who tend toward being overly forgiving may experience some pressure to forgive, when this may be the opposite of what they should be doing to escape patterns of oppression and abuse.

Fifth, time limitations of most conflict resolution processes prevent more gradual forms of trust-building. Therefore, these processes tend to push victims to take a risk on their offenders, without overly demanding justification. Some victims might easily feel some reluctance to forgive without sufficient justification, unless they are already predisposed toward this kind of risk-taking.

A Balance Between Therapeutic and Conflict Resolution Work

Now that I have positioned conflict resolution processes within five dimensions of forgiveness, I recommend certain adaptations necessary to avoid unfairly pressuring victims. My first consideration in this adaptive process is for conflict resolvers to embrace healing as the overriding context for forgiveness. For some people, healing is quick—for others, it is slow. For some people, healing is private and personal—for others, it more public and communal. For some, healing requires therapeutic work—for others, it requires spiritual or ethical work.

Within this context, I suggest that (when forgiveness is an issue) we accept that conflict resolution processes are committed toward turning point, proactive, and transactional forgiveness—a more community-centric form of healing—while also accepting that private therapy may be needed for successful incremental, reactive, and non-transactional forgiveness. Next, I suggest that we accept that conflict resolution processes tend to proactively encourage forgiveness rather than avoiding it. Again, private therapy can mitigate potential negative impact that this pro-activity has on the forgiveness-resistant or the overly-forgiving. Finally, I take up the problematic process commitment towards risk-taking forgiveness.

To begin this discussion, it seems helpful to remember that, by forgiving, we are attempting to heal ourselves, our perpetrators, and our community. However, while some people feel that this kind of healing should engage a dramatic turning point, others feel that such healing should involve gradual, incremental steps toward more forgiveness, avoiding any dramatic turning point. This more gradual approach might best occur in a private, therapeutic setting. However, conflict resolution processes could be adapted to more incremental forgiveness by validating incremental steps of forgiveness, and not expecting or scripting a dramatic turning point.

Similarly, some victims find healing within a process of direct engagement with the offender, where there is an interaction of apology and forgiveness. On the other hand, others feel that such healing should be more private and disengaged from the perpetrator. Within this context, transactional forgiveness is a kind of public, dialogic healing; whereas, non-transactional falls more on the private, mono-logic side of healing. For those whose notion of forgiveness is transactional, conflict resolution processes are a nice fit. However, for those whose notion of forgiveness is more non-transactional, conflict resolution processes may seem ill-fitting as currently designed.

Key to this distinction of dialogic vs. mono-logic healing is that, on the one hand, dialogic healing fits conflict resolution processes; on the other hand, mono-logic healing fits the therapeutic setting, where a victim can work privately with a therapist. Given this way of viewing forgiveness processes, it seems that conflict resolvers must be sensitive to the balance between more public, transactional processes between victim and offender, in contrast to non-transactional processes where the victim can heal in private.

This balance is demonstrated within the counseling profession, where couples work is balanced with individual work. In this way, conflict resolvers must be advocates for healing in the same way as therapists. Therefore, it seems to follow that conflict resolution processes that engage forgiveness must be designed to balance transactional and non-transactional healing. This balance might be achieved when victims are encouraged to take up personal healing in a private setting to prevent them from being re-traumatized during any interaction with perpetrators.

Turning to the forgiveness-resistant/overly-forgiving continuum, it is important to note that key concerns, within this dimension of forgiveness, are identity, self-respect, and self-contempt. These are complex notions in themselves. Identities can be driven by healthy self-respect, highly-defended unhealthy self-respect, self-contempt, or combinations of these. Interestingly, people tend to maintain identities, even if they are unhealthy or unpleasant, because a loss of identity threatens important social connections, as well as psychological equilibrium.

Therefore, fundamental identities are not likely to change within the limitations of conflict resolution processes. Consequently, when people are victimized, those identities with highly defended forms of self-respect can feel extremely threatened or unsettled. These people may resist forgiving because such an action is perceived to further undermine one's identity. People with this kind of defended pride feel a need to separate themselves from perpetrators that are perceived as having a lower status—a status that they desperately do not want to share.

At the other extreme, those people who are victimized, and whose identity is driven by a lack of self-respect or self-contempt, may already perceive themselves as victims; therefore, further victimizing may fit this victim identity all too well. With this dynamic, people who tend toward servility may forgive too easily, without concern for the moral transformation of the perpetrator. They forgive because they perceive their perpetrators as better, more powerful, or both.

In between these two extremes are those with a healthy kind of self-respect. Their attitude about forgiveness is not driven by pride or servility. For them, forgiveness is neither too difficult nor too easy. In contrast to this, victims without healthy self-respect are in particular need of personal therapy; otherwise, their forgiveness, or lack of same, undermines the positive reconciliation sought by conflict resolution processes.

The risk-taking continuum also presents a challenge to the current practice of conflict resolution. Though principled risk-taking, even in unreasonable circumstances, may be ethically laudable, it places the victim at a risk of being too soft-hearted, and being re-traumatized or re-victimized. At the other end of the continuum, those who demand that forgiveness be held to a high standard of reasonability run the risk of being hard-hearted. Again, these concerns seem best addressed by therapists, or ethical or spiritual advisors.

After this review of four of five dimensions of forgiveness, we can conclude that a balance between therapeutic work and conflict resolution work is a key to addressing the diversity of views and needs of victims. From this review, it seems evident that the commitments of conflict resolution processes need to be balanced with therapeutic options.

An Obligation to Forgive?

In the following, I address the proactive/reactive dimension and how it is problematized by the turning point/incremental forgiveness dimension. Additionally, reactive forgiveness presents conflict resolvers with an ethical dilemma: are victims shirking their responsibility to rebuild community by not being more proactive? These explorations raise additional concerns for conflict resolvers beyond the problem of providing a careful therapy/resolution balance.

Just as proactive forgiveness processes can place undue pressure on servile victims to forgive, proactive forgiveness processes can place too much pressure on incremental forgivers to become turning-point forgivers. It seems to me that the solution to this dilemma is for conflict resolution processes to become more flexible, so that they can embrace both turning-point forgivers and incremental forgivers. This adaptation would require that different expectations be built into the conflict resolution process. As it is now, these processes tend to embody the turning-point drama, where after a set of conditions are met (typically including apologies), forgiveness becomes the turning point away from resentment and towards reconciliation.

Therefore, a change in forgiveness expectations would require the drama of these processes to be re-scripted, so that there is no necessary turning point, but rather an acceptance of the incremental level of forgiveness that the victim is able to reasonably achieve. In addition to this adaptation towards incremental forgiveness, conflict resolution processes should also be balanced with therapeutic processes (as in the other dimensions), so that victims can heal, and consequently, be able to forgive at the highest reasonable level.

Just as proactive conflict resolution processes tend to be committed to turning point forgiveness, it is also important to recognize that such processes have a commitment to proactive forgiveness because they are essentially reconciliation processes whose goal is to recreate community. As Bishop Tutu says:

True forgiveness deals with the past (all of the past) to make the future possible. We have to accept that what we do for generations past, present, and yet to come. That is what makes a community a community or a people a people—for better or worse. (278)

As reconciliation processes, they often depend on a reconciling forgiveness, avoiding the reconciling-avoidant aspects of reactive forgiveness. If we think of these proactive conflict resolution processes as

being, at least partly, motivated by an aspiration to recreate a sense of community through a kind of renewal that we give to ourselves and/or others, and that can motivate improved ethical self-discipline by releasing us from the negative aspects of punishment, resentment, and clinging to the past, and if we think of proactive forgiveness as having this exact definition, then we can easily see how such proactive forgiveness is integral to reconciliation processes. However, there is a difficulty with this line of thought: forgiveness can mean such different things to different people, how can we base important processes upon one single definition of it?

A key illustration of this difficulty is to focus on victims who do not aspire to the communitarian goals of proactive forgiveness. These victims may consider forgiveness as one of a set of possible reactions to injustice. Alternatively, they might choose litigation, personal vengeance, passive aggression, or choose to ignore the situation completely. If these people somehow become engaged in the reconciliation work of a conflict resolution process, they may feel that such work violates the role that they see forgiveness playing within their lives. How should conflict resolvers address this disjunction?

To answer this question, I suggest that the first step is to accept reconciliation as the normal and proper role for most conflict resolution processes. This commitment enables these processes to do important community-building work. However, these processes also need to accommodate victims with differing conceptions of forgiveness. One way to characterize such difference is the proactive/reactive continuum.

I suggest that conflict resolvers carefully screen their clients to understand where they fall on this continuum. Reactive forgivers must not feel overly pressured into reconciliation processes; otherwise their autonomy and mental health may be compromised. Another way to ensure that their autonomy is being respected is to occasionally check to see how they are adapting to a reconciliation process, and that they are afforded a reasonably easy exit from that process, if desired.

Where therapy is an alternative to help those who lean toward non-transactional forgiveness or the extremes of pride and servility (as well as the extremes of risk-taking), those who lean toward reactive forgiveness may have ethical issues that need to be attended to, in addition to therapeutic issues. Their anger and reluctance to reconcile may be driven by a lack of moral strength. As social creatures, we have a certain moral obligation to nurture and recreate community. Reconciliation, following conflict, victimization, and the misuse of power, is a prime opportunity to do this kind of ethical work. Certainly, it is not just up to victims to carry this burden; perpetrators should always bear the heaviest burden. In addition, we should not expect victims or perpetrators to carry their respective burdens alone. Conflict resolvers, therapists, ethicists, and other supporters also play crucial roles to enable all parties to productively reconcile.

However, it seems that, when victims and perpetrators have the emotional and moral strength, their participation is crucial for community-building to proceed. Authentic community-building cannot be

done entirely by proxy—by those not directly involved in a victimization or traumatic conflict—though there are times when community-building and forgiveness processes may be powerfully done by proxy. To attend to the moral obligation to at least incrementally forgive for the sake of community-building, victims need the support, encouragement and advice of ethicists or spiritual counselors, as long as such activity does not put the victim in further harm's way.

Underlying this thinking is the supposition that we are obliged to forgive. The problem of whether forgiveness is an obligation, or purely voluntary, is greatly debated. I think that it is much easier to conceive of an obligation to forgive if it is not considered to be an absolute moral obligation, where one must turn from unforgiveness to complete forgiveness in one dramatic leap. Ironically, the dramatic turning-point conception of forgiveness makes it impossible to pose it as any kind of obligation because this kind of drama does not fit many instances of injustice and abuse. Under the turning-point conception, forgiveness becomes a dramatic gift that is more of a grand display of an enormous generosity than an obligation that could be thought as obligatory, to some degree, in most every case of injustice and abuse. Rather, I suggest that the incremental conception of forgiveness is one that is, in most cases, obligatory because it usually fits cases appropriately.

To be clear about this sort of obligation, it can be compared to other obligatory virtues. Just as we are obliged to have a certain measure of courage, temperance, modesty, etc., we are not obliged to act in ways beyond our capacities. In other words, in any given situation, we do not have to be absolutely forgiving, just as in any given situation; we do not have to be absolutely courageous, temperate, or modest. As an illustration, all that is possible is that we be courageous enough to call 911, temperate enough to avoid panic, while giving directions to emergency personnel, and modest enough to avoid taking undue credit for our role in a rescue. If we are the victims of a heinous crime, perhaps it is enough to expect that we be sufficiently forgiving enough to resist violent revenge and debilitating resentment—but never forgiving enough to reconcile with our abuser, rapist or torturer.

Using the incremental conception of forgiveness as our base, we can construct an obligation to rebuild community by whatever measures of forgiveness that victims can manage, with support from family, friends, therapists, ethicists, and spiritual advisors. Given such an obligation for victims to engage in community-building by proactively forgiving within their capacity, we have a justification for a kind of forgiveness that is much less dramatic than usually conceived.

To summarize the work of this paper, I have suggested five different assessments so that conflict resolvers can ensure that their processes are sensitive to victims varying conceptions of forgiveness. I have also examined the commitments that conflict resolution processes tend to have when they engage forgiveness. These commitments seem reasonable for victims when appropriately balanced with personal therapeutic, ethical, or spiritual work. I suggest that the key commitment of conflict

resolution practices is their pro-activity, where an incremental conception of forgiveness is understood as obligatory because victims are in a unique and powerful position to help restore and rebuild community.

Questions:

1. What is the mediation bias regarding forgiveness?

The mainstream practice of mediation expects that people be **proactive** in coming to mediation to resolve conflicts. This assumed proactivity seems to rule out a process where forgiveness and atonement could occur in a more reactive way, such as having the court system impose a process on the wrongdoer.

Also, this style of mediation assumes that there will be a measure of **turning-point forgiveness**, so that the construction of a restorative agreement can be made. Turning-point forgiveness seems to rule out a longer form of incremental forgiveness.

2. How do forgiveness and atonement help self-reinvention?

Both victims and victimizers can easily get stuck in these identities. A forgiveness/atonement process can help people get unstuck from these roles, and help them move forward with more positive identities.

3. How do forgiveness and atonement help with trauma and moral injury recovery?

Victims can experience ongoing **trauma** (post-traumatic stress disorder). Victimizers can experience ongoing **moral injury** (believing their identity most always remain as a morally bad person. The potential for starting reinvention through the forgiveness/atonement process can help both victims and victimizers begin to recover from trauma and moral injury.

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Part Two: Forgiveness and Atonement: Role in Social Justice

Dilemma for Part Two:

Is punishment or atonement required for those who have benefited from oppressive systems; or can they be forgiven? What atonement is required for them to be forgiven?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

I firmly believe that I, as a 99.8% white settler/colonist, have benefited from the oppressive systems of race, gender, education, and the middle class. I have committed my self to a life of atonement, where I go out of my way to help those who have lived without those privileges. I cofounded and was the founding director of PSU's conflict resolution programs, with the intent of impowering students and community members who have been oppressed and have lacked privileges. Prior to that, I did poverty-level work helping draftees, soldiers, and veterans who were harmed or traumatized by the Vietnam war, as well as working on other humanitarian projects. I am now in my 70s, but I am still committed to continuing to work, and not retire until it is absolutely necessary for me to do so. Have I done enough for atonement? I don't think I have done enough, until I am no longer able to contribute to social, economic, and climate justice. Am I right about this? Is this an extreme view?

Gould Essay: The Necessity of Forgiveness in the Struggle for Freedom from Oppression

I answer this question by examining a rather sweeping argument about the role of forgiveness in overcoming oppression. Because of the wide scope of such an argument, I will simply be opening the discussion on this topic, rather than creating an exhaustive study of it. The purpose of this chapter is to suggest that forgiveness is necessary for freedom from three sorts of oppression: *direct oppression*, *internalized oppression* and *counter-oppression*. I make a case that forgiveness is necessary in

overcoming each of these kinds of oppression and that it is required for true and final liberation from oppression—although it is certainly not the only element in that liberation. Furthermore, I suggest that ongoing practices of forgiveness protect us from new forms of oppression arising in our lives.

I also unpack the notion of forgiveness by suggesting that it is grounded in a sensitivity to the dehumanization of both oppressed and oppressor. Such sensitivity to this dehumanization encourages our compassion and motivates our acts of kindness. It also helps us resist hated and revenge. Interestingly, a kind of wonder, hope, and an anticipation of the unexpected may be at the root of our ability to resist the certainties that feed our hate and vengeance. I use the novel, *The Color Purple*, to illustrate how forgiveness works within the context of African American struggles for freedom. I also address a counter-argument against my view of the importance of forgiveness in liberation. In the conclusion of this chapter, I will show how forgiveness is particularly important in reversing re-traumatization that is sometimes caused by African American storytelling.

Direct Oppression

I now turn to *direct oppression* as the first of the three kinds of oppression. *Direct oppression* exists when certain people hold power over other people on the grounds that the powerless group is unjustifiably deemed less worthy than the powerful group. Oppression is rather obvious in the case of racism. Patriarchal oppression is only somewhat more complicated by Aquinas's rather weak justification of it as an "association of equals" protected by male strength and rationality (Aquinas date). Parental power is based on a reasonable protection standard and, most importantly, does not turn on the unworthiness of children. Society's struggle against crime does suggest the unworthiness of criminals and the jailor's power over them. However, a criminal's unworthiness seems to be justified by the due processes of law. Interestingly, as we shall see later in this chapter, even a criminal's worthiness may be redeemed through appropriate forgiveness.

Furthermore, in societies with huge differences in wealth and power, we tend to find members of the powerful group justifying their power by seeing those with less power as not being worthy of power. All kinds of stories about the superiority of the powerful and the inferiority of the powerless are pervasive throughout societies with dramatic power disparities. In general terms, the powerful view themselves as superior in all of the important ways. They generally see themselves as dominant intellectually, organizationally, physically, aesthetically, spiritually, and morally. The disempowered are seen as generally subordinate in all of these ways. If a person of color has strength in any of the aforementioned ways, they might be seen as a kind of "honorary white person," or exceptions to the general rule of inferiority. They are celebrated in their exceptionality, not their commonality. If these "exceptional" individuals do not support the status quo, they are easily deemed enemies of the state. Martin Luther King's criticism of the status quo turned him into an enemy of the state in the eyes of many in power. In death, he is often misperceived as representing the *completed* liberation of Blacks–a

useful fiction of the ongoing oppressive culture. Certainly, we are familiar with these general terms of oppression.

Direct Oppression as the Unforgivable

In an important sense, *direct oppression* represents the unforgivable. To forgive ongoing oppression is to grant it permission. Such forgiveness would be the kind of "soft-headedness" decried by Martin Luther King. We might suppose that such forgiveness would be like casting pearls before swine. But King would warn us against thinking of anyone as swine. If we consider the oppressor to be swine, we fail to have compassion and fail to see "people as people (King date, 5)." King would urge us to consider oppression unforgivable, but our particular oppressors are always potentially forgivable—even if they are justifiably found unworthy.

This forgiveness is based on the following two insights. First, although to be oppressed is certainly dehumanizing, it is also dehumanizing to be an oppressor. Those who are dehumanized—oppressed or oppressor–knowingly or not–seem to deserve our compassion and even, at times, our kindness. Although it is easy to see that being oppressed can be awful, we often fail to see that being an oppressor is also, in an important way, awful, as an oppressor has arguably lost his or her humanity by being an oppressor. With this view, retaining one's humanity requires compassion and care towards victims of oppression, as well as a commitment to end oppression—freeing both oppressed and oppressor from their dehumanization. This view could be defended in greater detail; but due to insufficient space, it will not be further explored here.

Secondly, out of our compassion for both victim and oppressor emerges the possibility of forgiveness. Holding out hope that an oppressor will stop oppressing is also holding out the possibility of eventual forgiveness. Oppressors can be motivated to change, at least partly, by the possibility of redemption and forgiveness. In this way, compassion and the possibility of forgiveness help pave the way toward the transformation of oppressors into allies in the struggle for freedom.

Alternative to Turning Point Forgiveness

This possibility of forgiveness does not assume that forgiveness is necessarily a dramatic and instantaneous shift from unforgiveness to forgiveness. Rather, forgiveness is often a lengthy process along a continuum from unforgiveness to forgiveness. In this process, there may be unilateral gestures of apology and/or forgiveness, as well as bilateral exchanges of forgiveness responding to apology.

This dual response to oppression—unforgiveness toward oppression and forgiveness toward oppressor—is the lead-off idea in Martin Luther King's 1963 book, *Strength to Love*. King quotes Matthew 10:16, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (King date, 1)" In his overall

case for the character of the true freedom fighter, King proceeds to support the character antitheses of tough-mindedness and tenderheartedness, while resisting soft-mindedness and hardheartedness. Tough-mindedness suggests knowing when an act of oppression is unforgivable[i]—when we must not bend in our struggle to end it. On the other hand, tenderheartedness suggests a forgiving and generous spirit that liberates us inwardly and in our relations with others. Just as King encouraged us to have the character antitheses of tough-mindedness and tenderheartedness, I further suggest that we must have another set of character antitheses: righteous anger and bitterness about oppression, combined with compassion and the real possibility of generosity toward oppressors as human beings—the possibility of forgiveness. Hatred holds no such possibility. Admittedly, these character antitheses create some inner conflict; but role models like Martin Luther King can help us to develop a harmonious dual nature.

Internalized Oppression

Now we move to the second form of oppression: *internalized oppression*. Arguably, this dynamic is more difficult to understand and overcome, as i*nternalized oppression* occurs when the oppressed accept their supposed inferiority. By accepting this view of themselves, the oppressed begin to oppress themselves. Tragically, this *internalized oppression* can be more dangerous than *direct oppression* because it is so self-destructive and difficult to overcome. It generates self-hatred that can lead to a wide variety of self-destructive behaviors. Those self-destructive behaviors are commonly understood as criminal and psychological, without an overt oppressive dimension.

Here is where stories of resistance and anger are so important. They provide alternate ways for the powerless to see themselves. Without these highly charged stories, the oppressed form an unchallenged negative view of themselves. This negative view cuts in two ways. First, it creates self-disrespect. And second, it undermines respect for one's peers—the necessary grounds for any political solidarity.

I suggest that self-forgiveness, for the harm one does to oneself, is the key to fully undo *internalized oppression*. This self-forgiveness affirms the worth of the oppressed and stops the cycle of re-traumatization—the cycle of harm layered on harm. Although anger towards the system of oppression is necessary and important, inner anger and bitterness is corrosive and toxic toward inner well-being. In this way, I suggest a third set of character antitheses. This set combines outer anger toward the system of oppression and inner forgiveness and peace. Outer anger keeps us engaged in the struggle against oppression and the inner forgiveness and peace releases us from self-disrespect, inner bitterness and self-destructive tendencies brought on by *internalized oppression*. Without the two additional sets of character antitheses, mentioned above, (anger toward oppression and compassion for both self and oppressor), stories of resistance and anger can easily turn into stories of revenge.

Counter Oppression

Counter-oppression is the third sort of oppression. This arises when revenge reverses the direct oppression story–where the old oppressors become the newly-victimized. The oppressor becomes demonized in a mirror reflection of the demonized-oppressed. Although *counter-oppression* can be understood as somewhat inevitable in the liberation of an oppressed group, it regrettably entails the evil of oppressing the previous oppressors. This is most obvious in cases where one ethnic group has dominated another and then there is a revolution against the dominating ethnicity. In Rwanda, the minority Tutsis dominated the majority Hutus under Belgian colonial rule. After independence, massacres of Tutsis by Hutus continued from the 1960s into the 1990s (Staub and Pearlman 2001, 210). Some would argue that this oppression was justified by the demonstrated unworthiness of the previous oppressors. However, in historical accounts of liberations of oppressed groups, it is sometimes the case that previous oppressors renounce their attitudes and practices and seek forgiveness, as in South Africa at the end of apartheid. In these cases, it seems that the urge toward revenge must by overcome by compassion and forgiveness. Otherwise, brutality gains new life and liberation is reduced to a mere shift in power.

To overcome all three sorts of oppression and attain true liberation, the following three tasks must be accomplished: First, the structures of *direct oppression* must be dismantled. Second, self-disrespect and the consequent peer-disrespect must be overcome. And third, the practice of demonizing the oppressor or reversing oppression through revenge must be overcome. These challenges must be undertaken in order to create a vision of a world without oppression. How can all this be done?

The answer to this question is undoubtedly a long one—requiring much more space than this chapter. Here, I am simply making the case that forgiveness is at the heart of this multiple process. I argue that forgiveness has the power to regenerate self-respect, affirm solidarity with one's peers, and create the foundation for a level of teamwork and community throughout society. This sense of community-wide teamwork, including former oppressors and oppressed, creates the ground for a transformed society capable of eliminating all forms of structural oppression. Obviously, forgiveness alone cannot revolutionize society; but I suggest that it is central and necessary. I suggest that social transformation without forgiveness merely reorders the dynamics of oppression, self-disrespect and demonization.

Oppressor Self-Hatred

Another way to argue for the necessity of forgiveness in overcoming oppression is to explore how oppressors can learn to hate themselves through the very dynamics of oppression that are supposed to be in the oppressors' self-interest. This self-hate can undermine the advantages that oppression is supposed to generate. Oppressor self-hate can occur through the reflexive counter-demonization of the oppressed. In response to oppressor demonization, the oppressed sometimes counter-demonize the oppressed. In European-American demonization of African Americans, black people often counter-demonize whites. Often whites will internalize this counter-demonization, creating white self-hate; the

oppressor is experiencing self-disrespect, just like the oppressed. Oppressors with self-disrespect can turn to self-destructive or criminal acts since they have joined the ranks of the self-oppressed. This dysfunction can also turn to racist violence. The film *American History X* explores this white self-disrespect as skinhead racism.

What a tragedy! Demonization—counter-demonization. Internalized counter-demonization—strengthened bigotry. It seems that almost everyone is vulnerable to feeling both self-disrespect and disrespect for everyone else!

Re-humanization

Therefore, the first step in the re-humanization of this dehumanized cesspool is forgiveness. It is the first step because, without forgiveness, we are immobilized by hatred. Hatred makes it impossible to work with the subjects of our hate—most importantly ourselves! It seems that there is really no other choice than to forgive ourselves for our inner disrespect and for our demonization of our fellow humans. From this forgiveness, we begin to find a basis to work with everyone around us toward the goal of a fully emancipated social order. We may be tempted to deny our tendencies toward self-hate, demonization, and bigotry; but we must be aware of the consequent psychic damage and hypocrisy that can be created by these tendencies.

The Color Purple

It is precisely within this realm of psychic damage and hypocrisy resulting from layers of oppression that Alice Walker writes her novel, *The Color Purple* (1982). I suggest that this novel shows how forgiveness can be a key part of black and non-black emancipation by addressing the underlying damage of layers of oppression. Because *The Color Purple* is a controversial novel, I will say a few words to qualify my use of it here. This novel is primarily about the liberation of a woman named Celie from *direct oppression*, *internalized oppression*, and *counter-oppression*. These sorts of oppression are manifested in the broad sweep of racism in the South, as well as in her intimately personal relationships. However, her liberation follows and is mirrored in other male and female characters in the story as well. Indeed, even the reader is offered this liberation.

The Color Purple has been the subject of a considerable amount of debate concerning its characterization of African American males. It has been charged that Walker has contributed to an oppressive stereotype of African American males as domineering, violent, and lascivious. It has been counter-charged that Walker has helped liberate African American females from hidden forms of domestic violence. It is certainly plausible that there is truth on both sides of this debate. It may be too glib to say that important works of fiction are rarely unproblematic. Rather, it is probably safe to say that *The Color Purple* is both profoundly liberating, while in some ways troubling. In its efforts toward gentle liberation, it may

ironically be guilty of a kind of re-traumatization. As important as this debate is, I do not engage it further in this chapter. My purpose here is to use *The Color Purple* as an illustration of the unique value that forgiveness can have in African American and other forms of liberation.

In the first passage from *The Color Purple*, Walker illuminates how wonder, hope, and the possibility of the unexpected feed forgiveness and healing. This is clearly again expressed in the following conversation between Celie and her former husband, Mr._____[ii]. At the end of the novel, he has undergone a dramatic transformation away from abusiveness—from a hateful person to a lovable person.

I think we are here to wonder, myself. [says Mr._____] To wonder. To ast. And that in wondering bout the big things and asting bout the big things, you learn about the little ones, almost by accident. But you never know nothing more about the big things than you start out with. The more I wonder, he say, the more I love. And people start to love you back, I bet, I say. [Celie says] (Walker 1982, 239).

This interchange between Celie and Mr._____ is particularly extraordinary because Mr._____ was Celie's domestic abuser. However, he came to understand that he abused Celie because she was not his true love, Shug, and he felt sorrow for his behavior. He came to understand how to love and how to resist hate through wonder. In this sense, wonderment is accompanied by humility. This uncertain wonder is interestingly contrasted to the certainty of hate.

Furthermore, Celie forgave Mr._____ through a dialogic process. He earned Celie's forgiveness because of his genuine transformation. However, Celie's forgiveness did not follow solely from his transformation. It was also born of uncertain wonder. She was not sure that she could hate Mr._____ after she had come to understand, and identify with, the rage he felt upon losing Shug. Celie was experiencing the same rage when she lost Shug, as Shug was also her own true love. In this way, Celie saw herself in Mr._____.

One could argue that Celie's forgiveness of Mr._____ is facilitated by the fact that they are both African Americans victimized by the same oppressor, namely European Americans. If her forgiveness is viewed as a type of solidarity against a common oppressor, this is undeniably true. However, it is important to note how often an accommodation to domestic abuse might occur in order to preserve the appearance of solidarity. This hypocritical solidarity seems to be precisely the issue that Alice Walker seeks to dramatize in this novel.

In addition to their reconciliation, there is also an interesting shift in both Celie's and Mr._____'s identities. They come to understand how both Shug and another friend, Sofie, have resisted the self-disrespect that is the hallmark of *internalized oppression*. Celie and Mr._____ are clearly both inspired by the example of these two women, as is illustrated in the following conversation:

Mr._____ ast me the other day what it is I love so much bout Shug. He say he love her style. He say to tell the truth, Shug act more manly than most men. I mean she upright, honest. Speak her mind and the devil take the hindmost, he say. You know Shug will fight, he say. Just like Sofia. She bound to live her life and be herself no matter what.

Mr._____ think all this is stuff men do. But Harpo not like this, I tell him. You not like this. What Shug got is womanly it seem like to me. Specially since she and Sofia the ones got it.

Sofia and Shug not like men, he say, but they not like women either (Walker 1982, 238).

Of course, this identity transformation also alludes to the radical notion that humanity freed from self-disrespect and oppressive gender roles is a new humanity indeed! One could make the case that Walker's vision in *The Color Purple* is just this sort of emancipated humanity where gender and race oppression, especially internalized gender and race oppression, yield to free relations where strength of character is an inspiration, not a domination.

A Case Against Forgiveness

It is now important to address an objection to the role of forgiveness in the pursuit of an emancipated social order. In the following, I am borrowing the general form of an argument developed by Judith A. Boss (Boss date), who used this argument to oppose the use of forgiveness in cases of domestic violence, where such forgiveness helps maintain conditions of oppression. The argument, with racism replacing domestic violence, goes like this:

Because of inequities in power in our society, African Americans are likely to be the victims of racial prejudice more often that non-African Americans. Consequently, it is African Americans who are likely to be most often called upon to forgive. Unconditional forgiveness of racial prejudice and the putting aside of feelings of resentment are often seen as a virtue and indicative of an exemplary moral character. However, this conception of forgiveness cannot be morally justified. Instead of being a virtue, unconditional forgiveness in the face of ongoing racism serves to maintain and perpetuate the current racist and oppressive structure of society. (Boss date)

The first observation that we need to make about the above argument is that it appears that the notion of forgiveness is understood as primarily monologic. The victim of racism is being asked to monologically forgive the offender. I suggest that forgiveness should primarily be understood as dialogic. In almost every case, there ideally needs to be a process where offenders take responsibility for their actions, show genuine remorse, and affirm a commitment to improve. It is in such dialogic circumstances that forgiveness helps to further the purposes of empowerment, community and emancipation.

My second observation about the preceding argument is that in the absence or impossibility of such dialogue, a monological unconditional forgiveness does have the virtue of freeing the victim from endless bitterness and *internalized oppression*. This unconditional forgiveness may not serve the purposes of general emancipation, but it can free a victim from this one dehumanizing aspect of racism.

The key claim in the above argument is that forgiveness can be like granting permission to racial prejudice. This would be horribly wrong. We never want to grant permission to racism in any way, especially in a way that masks itself as moral. We can certainly imagine instances of forgiveness that do act like granting permission. If someone repeatedly insults a person, forgiveness can certainly seem to be granting permission–especially if that person does not seek help from others to help stop the insulting behavior.

Martin Luther King

In getting help from others in the struggle against racism, we can show our righteous anger and tough-mindedness, while not losing our tenderheartedness–without losing our self-respect, our love of others, or our strength to forgive. Martin Luther King Jr. gave us many gifts–one of which is the challenge of character antitheses. With King as our role model, we can find a way to be justly angry, yet not lose our compassion; we can demand accountability, yet not lose our capacity to forgive. Indeed, it can be argued that compassion has two faces: one that reflects tough-mindedness and righteous anger, and the other that reflects tenderheartedness and forgiveness.

At this point, a word must be said about the distinction between forgiving evil and forgiving people. Here, I focus on the role of forgiving oneself and others that can be found in *The Color Purple*. I suggest that narratives of such inner and outer forgiveness can be liberating in the fullest sense. However, I warn that we must be careful about how we understand forgiveness. It can take the form of permissiveness toward evil, and this must be resisted. In an important sense, oppression is unforgivable and to forgive it before it is eradicated is to give permission to it, making the forgiver a kind of collaborator in oppression. But how can we know if our forgiveness is healing ourselves and our relations with others, or whether it is permitting evil?

My answer is that we will probably have to revert to uncertain wonder. We may never know for sure whether we are making the right choice. Again, certainty in these distinctions may only be possible for those who hate. People who hate are good at making judgments and distinctions, being certain of them, and holding to them. Unfortunately, this ability to be certain makes it hard to forgive. Love and forgiveness seem to be much more of an affirmation of the difficulty of knowing how to think about others. Other people are often full of surprises.

Role of African American Storytelling

In this final section of the paper, I want to comment on the role of African American storytelling in abolitionist and liberation work. My contention is that these narratives work both for and against emancipation. On the positive side of the ledger, slave narratives sensitize both African Americans and non-African Americans to the inhumanity of slavery and oppression. Furthermore, the ongoing tragedy of certain elements of the African American experience is profoundly dramatized in contemporary storytelling. Victimization is ugly, but the particularity of the seemingly endless African American victimization is more than ugly; it is horrific. Slave narratives have evolved into contemporary stories of both inner and outer oppression and hatred. These narratives can also contain messages of hope, freedom, and forgiveness—messages that pave the way to both political and personal liberation.

If there can be any downside to this story-telling tradition, it is the danger that these stories may re-traumatize African Americans. They are hurt anew by being reminded of past trauma. In turn, this re-traumatization can develop a picture of African Americans as perennial victims. Worse, this re-traumatization can make the world look like nothing more than a drama between victims and victimizers, where the only escape from victimization is by being a victimizer. As an example of this, several years ago I remember seeing a young African American female gang member on television saying that she was tired of being a victim and that her gang made it possible for her to be a victimizer.

1. Michelle Scott and V. Volkan explain this retraumatization dynamic in detail. In their study of the "transgenerational transmission of trauma," they find that succeeding generations suffer "helplessness, shame, and humiliation" (Scott date, 1) as a result of the profound suffering of their ancestors. "When a whole society has undergone massive trauma, victimized adults may endure guilt and shame for not having protected their children (Volkan date, 42)"

> The by-product of such trauma is a perennial, collective mourning over the loss of group dignity, self-esteem and identity. The mourning is characterized by conscious and unconscious communications passed down from generation to generation in an attempt to mourn the group's losses[.] Volkan proposes that as transgenerational transmission of trauma occur, the trauma is perpetuated as its shared mental representation and is deposited into the psyches of subsequent generations, thereby impacting future generations with the same sense of helplessness, shame and humiliation experienced by the elders. Ultimately, the large group shares a collective identity which is perpetually haunted and stifled by its "memories" of victimization. (Scott date, 1-2)

In the contemporary African American community, Scott writes that "[t]here is a shame associated with acting black, a disdain for acting white, and an ambivalence associated with skin color; this suggests the lack of core identity or unified self (Scott date, 13)." From this view of the transgenerational transmission of trauma, storytelling in the African American community can be both liberating and

enslaving. Speech professor Grace Sims Holt (1972) concludes that "[o]nce the physical chains are removed, language becomes the major vehicle for perpetuating the legitimation of the subsequent stages of oppression" (Scott date, 1-2).

It is in this concern about African American narrative (and I include gangsta rap music as a member of this narrative) that Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is particularly inspirational. Celie, the central character, sees herself as a perennial victim until she meets Shug (a woman who eventually becomes Celie's lover), who helps Celie understand how to move beyond a victim-identity by freeing herself from her inner image as ugly and incapable. Celie also forgives her former husband, Mr._____, who has abused her, as she comes to understand how his humanity has been twisted in a similar way to her own. They form a bond that was impossible before and they become more psychologically healthy. In this way, a higher level of empowerment is achieved through inner and outer forgiveness, as well as the creation of positive self and other images.

In the face of hideous forms of oppression and inequity, a story like *A Color Purple* can be liberating and empowering. If there are imperfections in this work of art, those weaknesses, along with the novel's great strengths, create possibilities for future works of art to dare great things that give us a vision of transformed identities and relationships.

Summary

In this essay, I have made some observations about the role of forgiveness in addressing *direct oppression, internalized oppression* and *counter oppression*. Most importantly, I suggest that forgiveness is an important first step in overcoming these forms of oppression. The ability to forgive also provides a way to prevent future oppression by helping us resist the tendency toward demonizing those who harm us. However, it is important to note that forgiveness must have a proper context. That context is where the oppressed are afforded real opportunities for emancipation and where a significant number of oppressors seek genuine atonement.

Further Questions:

1. Should prisons be abolished?

A strong case can be made for abolishing prisons because they represent the institutionalization of social and economic inequality and injustice. Certainly, there should be locked hospitals for the criminally insane, but everyone else should be rehabilitated without the humiliation and abuse of the prison system.

2. Are rehabilitation, hospitalization, education, and guaranteed annual income workable alternatives to prisons?

Yes, each of these positively address the social and economic systems that drive ongoing social injustice.

Certainly, there are social forces at play in the way some people are socialized to harm others, and social forces are at play to underestimate the suffering of victims. There is some truth to the saying that 'hurt people hurt people, however, even within these social drivers, perpetrators do have some kind of choice—at least there should be a way for perpetrators to imagine a they could have avoided hurting others. Likewise, society has a deep responsibility for providing counseling and other services to victims, whose harm is often subsumed beneath the harm that law-breaking has done to the state.

This shift in framing troubling behavior as 'crime and punishment' to a framework of 'restorative justice' is not just for offenses that rise to the level of crime, but for misdeeds between people of such severity as to fracture friendships, working relationships, and family bonds. Ultimately, this chapter suggests that atonement and forgiveness processes should be available throughout the community, as well as the broader society.

With the future widespread availability of these atonement and forgiveness processes, we need to also create opportunities for education, employment, housing, and other services for both atoning perpetrators and forgiving victims, as a method of removing the social conditions that put people in the way of harm in the first place—both perpetrating harm and suffering harm.

Once these social resources are in place, we can then realistically imagine prison abolition, where the only people confined will be the criminally insane in locked psychiatric facilities. Everyone else is potentially redeemable, given the promise of restorative justice to recreate a social structure that nurtures its citizens, rather than put them at risk.

[i] I am indebted to Professor Cheyney Ryan, University of Oregon, for his work on the subject of the unforgivable.

[ii] Walker uses anonymous convention, "Mr._____" for doubtless many literary purposes.

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Chapter Seven: Navigating Solid, Liquid, and Mystical Knowledge

Part One: Solid and Liquid Knowledge

Readings:

"Feelings and Perceptions" by Thich Nhat Hanh

"Time is the Flux of Duration" by Henri Bergson

Key Dilemmas:

- Is any knowledge absolutely certain or solid?
- Is all knowledge uncertain or liquid?
- Is some knowledge certain enough?
- Is some knowledge not certain enough?
- How can we know how to tell the difference between the above suppositions?

Examples to help us work through this dilemma:

- Thich Nhat Hanh tells us a story about a father who was certain of this son's death, and that certainty prevented him from answering his door to a person claiming to be his son—believing him to be an imposter. In these days of accusations of "fake news," how can we be certain of anything that we hear? For example, why do we trust Snopes.com, the website that validates or invalidates news claims? In conflicts, how can we know whether the disputants are telling the truth, or how can disputants be certain of the events that happened, creating the conflict, in the first place?\

When we are **certain** of something, then it provides a solid piece of knowledge that we can depend upon. When we are **uncertain** of something, then it is a liquid or flexible piece of knowledge.

- For religious people, the sacred texts of their religion provide the certainty for their values and beliefs. The support that they offer is often in the spiritual strength and community solidarity that

is provided by their fundamental religious beliefs. However, "support" is not "proof."

- Some people, who reject religious beliefs as absolutes, turn to science for certainty because it is based on the set of empirically-tested facts about the natural world. For these people, what can be empirically measured, with repeated testing, are facts that one can hold as certain. However, repeated testing and information from related fields of inquiry can challenge the certainty of "facts," showing that older facts are not as certain as newer, more refined, facts. In other words, the solidity of outmoded facts is replaced with the stronger solidity of newly developed facts.
- A common science-based construction of the world is based on the belief that the universe is wholly made up of elements that can be measured, meaning that if an aspect of our world cannot be measured, then it must be illusory.

However, the above belief, like religious beliefs, cannot be empirically supported. And if it cannot be empirically supported, then it must be understood as an unprovable belief, just as religious beliefs are unprovable. Therefore, the view that only science can tell us what is a fact and what is illusion is just as problematic as religion telling us what is a fact and what is illusion.

- Of course, there are religious scientists who can navigate our world, knowing that all knowledge is somewhat of a leap of faith. In their leaps of faith, they find certainly in both science and religion.
- One might argue that a lot of good things, like technology, come out of scientific processes, so science must have a firm basis. It certainly has a firm basis in the material world of measurable objects, but it cannot navigate the world of creativity, personality, love, friendship, connection, profundity, emotion, and spiritual experiences. Of course, science believes that all of the above listed phenomena are the result of material processes in the brain, and not stand-alone aspects of our universe.

Maybe this is true, but such a reduction of love to brain and hormone processes certainly takes the romance out of the notion! Believers in love as an interpersonal, social, and spiritual force that is, at least somewhat, independent of brains and hormones, will reject the cold, dry reduction of love to the mechanical interaction of chemicals and brain processes.

- If science and religion cannot provide certainty, then what can provide certainty? I suggest, as Ludwig Wittgenstein has claimed, that certainty is situational and contextual. As I write this chapter, I have no doubt that I am awake and not dreaming. I have no doubt that my computer is real and will store what I write.

I have dreamed that I was typing on a computer and I have dreamed that my computer did not store my writing, but I only come to doubt whether I am awake, when the question comes up for consideration. The continuity of waking life is quite different from the discontinuity of dreams. Dreams don't

maintain context over time, and as the context of my writing in my office has not changed at all, I am secure in the certainty of my activity. We take a lot of things for granted, as we navigate our lives, and this "taking things for granted" is precisely the kind of certainty that we depend upon.

- Some people believe in God as a way to feel protected by God, keeping them and their loved ones out of danger. When tragedy strikes their lives, they can feel abandoned by God, as Jews in the Holocaust felt abandoned by God. Some people lose their belief in God, when they feel abandoned by God for many reasons. Their certainty was challenged because they thought they made a deal with God: they believed in God, and in return God would protect them. If God failed to protect us, then, like an insolvent insurance plan, we don't trust in the power of God.
- Other people believe in God without expecting any protection. These people believe that God has a plan for everyone, and that they plan can seem mysterious at times. However, their faith is strengthened by other aspects of religious experience and community.
- Some people believe in a science-based universe, and that belief is all they need to feel that their lives are rich with meaning and significance. However, some people with this belief have a life-crisis, where their lives are drained of meaning and significance. How can they regain a life rich with meaning? If psychotherapy cannot provide help them regain a meaningful life, might these people need an experience more powerful than therapy? For some of these people, religious or mystical experience provides a new depth of meaning and significance.
- Life's seemingly endless conflicts can drain our lives of meaning and significance. Might we turn to religious or mystical experience as a resource to regain our sense of a meaningful life—when no other choice seems to work? Those of us that want to manage our life's conflicts better, or improve our careers as conflict facilitators, may need ways to find peace and meaning.

The Significance of Solid and Liquid Knowledge of Conflict Workers:

The lesson to be learned here is that everyone has beliefs that cannot be proven empirically, and even the knowledge, that has a history of empirical proof, can be wrong because of the way research is conducted, or the way that knowledge is framed within cultural traditions. However, there are certain facts that resist doubt, such as the fact that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. This is an empirically-tested fact, that will be true until the sun deteriorates to the extent that it cannot hold earth into orbit, or some giant asteroid strikes earth and sends it catapulting out into deep space. For people working with conflict, the key is to help people stuck in their beliefs to be a little more open-minded to the beliefs of others. And psychologically, being open-minded to the possibility of some new beliefs might help us find more rich experiences and happiness.

In Thich Nhat Hanh's "Feelings and Perceptions," there is an exploration of solid and liquid thinking, as

well as an inquiry into the limits and possibilities of perception within his Buddhist, Eastern, tradition. In the Buddhist tradition, humans are capable of living with more uncertainty about the details of our lives, while also expanding our experiences into the peaceful realm of timelessness and space-less-ness.

Henri Bergson's "Time is the Flux of Duration," approaches the same experience suggested by Thich Nhat Hanh. However, Bergson works within the Western tradition of thought. He explains the reasoning behind Western philosophy's more traditional view of time, as an abstract matrix, similar to space. Both time and space are defined as measurements within Western science's cognitive framing of our empirical world.

After giving this view its proper validation, Bergson posits an alternative view that avoids the notion of measurement and, instead, focuses on the experience of time as duration. This second view shifts from the traditional abstract understanding of time to the visceral, sensory experience of time-going-by. Interestingly, an experience-based understanding can also illuminate the notion of timelessness, when we do not experience any time going by—we are lost in the moment, as we do not notice any time passing.

Similarly, we might also look at the notion of space, and break with the notion of space as a measurable matrix, and focus on space as the experience of the space around us as spacious or confining, orderly or messy, private or public, finite and infinite. And as in timelessness, we can also think of space–less–ness as the sensation that the whole universe is present to us, rather than distant and absent.

Interestingly, these notions of timelessness and space–less–ness are key to indigenous beliefs, as well as some other religious mystical traditions from other cultures and parts of the world.

Being aware of these different ways to think about time, space, religion, connection, and experience will help conflict workers navigate the variety of beliefs, sensibilities, and experiences that disputants bring to a conflict. In this way, conflict workers' understanding of these differences can keep the collaborative process fully inclusive.

Furthermore, conflict facilitators' study of these various ways of experiencing the world can help them find the most connected and peaceful way of being in the midst of stressful conflicts. When we, as conflict facilitators, create a space as free of the constraints of stress, free of the forces of exclusion, free of the constraints of time and space, we can help disputants be calm, connected, empathetic. In this atmosphere, we can improve our ability to navigate the space between disputants, using the methods suggested at the beginning of this book, as well as other appropriate strategies.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is liquid knowledge?

Liquid knowledge is the affirmation that knowledge is often contextual, and is ideally placed on a spectrum across a continuum. Therefore, liquid knowledge is contrasted with solid knowledge, where knowledge is thought to transcend context to become a fixed "universal." This notion of solid or fixed knowledge is often based on polarized categories, where something Is right or wrong, good or evil, hate or love, smart or dumb, etc. Interestingly, this contrast of solid and liquid knowledge may, mistakenly, become a polarized way of understanding knowledge (solid vs. liquid), not a flexible way of understanding knowledge (more solid/less liquid; more liquid/less solid).Therefore, we need to start again in defining solid and liquid knowledge, not as polarized categories, but on a continuum where solid knowledge is at one end of a continuum of knowledge, and liquid knowledge is on the other end of the continuum—and muddy in-between. Such a continuum affirms that there are certain kinds of certainty that can be thought of a reasonably solid, transcending context, such as our faith that the sun will rise tomorrow, and that we can trust that the physical world will not suddenly disappear, and that our bodies, communities, and world arc toward healing and reconciliation, rather than sickness and alienation (as urged by Martin Luther King).

At the other side of this continuum of knowledge, there are more liquid kinds of knowledge that are less certain, but more flexible to adapt to a given circumstance with nuance and insight.

2. How is CR biased by its commitment to dogmatic/solid thinking?

The following are examples of dogmatic or solid ways that mainstream conflict resolution processes impede progress with disputants who are differently oriented:

- Processes that are comfortable for mainstream white people should also be comfortable for people of other races and cultures. (Not always)
- Conflict resolution should proceed by combining the self-interests of the disputants. (Not always)
- Disputants will get along better after having a conflict resolved with a mediator. (Not always)
- Disputants are generally comfortable sharing their feelings. (Not always)
- Disputants want their mediator to be neutral. (Not always)
- Disputants should never interrupt each other (Not always)
- Disputants should never raise their voices. (Not always)

The common mediation practices, above, are actually highly contextualized in the context of mainstream communication standards. They may not be appropriate for one or more disputants. Conflict workers need to adapt their processes to the comfort level of disputants. When disputants have different ways of working with conflict, the facilitator needs to adapt the process to something that is acceptable to all disputants—as much as possible.

3. What are the consequences, when it is assumed that pre-suppositional beliefs are true, and therefore "solid"?

If someone assumes that their presuppositions are absolutely true, then they have sealed themselves off from other possibilities. If my belief in God is assumed to be absolutely true, then other beliefs that do not factor in God's existence are ruled out as false. If my belief that science proceeds from rock-bottom assumptions, including that the only entities that exist are those that can be measured, then I have ruled out the possibility that immeasurable entities, like spirits, immaterial personalities, and immaterial connections between people are illusions or hallucinations.

If we don't believe that our presuppositions are absolutely true, then we open our lives up to alternative presuppositions—all of which are not provable, but yet my resonate with our experiences. Conflict facilitators may be more successful if they do not have absolute presuppositions because they will seem more open-minded.

4. What beliefs can be taken as certain and true?

- Everyday life has many features that, in most instances, are hard to question, such as:
- The ground will support us.
- The bodies of living creatures die at some point.
- The air is relatively safe to breath.
- People we know do not drastically change their identity.
- The wheels of the economy churn along.
- Climate change is real and we must make many changes to avoid human extinction.

Each of these statements can be challenged in certain ways at certain times, but generally, they are true. When presented with any claim to truth, there is a way to question it. Descartes thought that what we take as reality could have been constructed by an evil demon. A few contemporary philosophers claimed that our reality could be a computer simulation, created by a superior form of

life. However, we do not go through our day worrying that the ground might not support us, unless there are clear indications of a landslide or earthquake.

5. How interrelated are notions of truth, complexity, dogmatism, certainty, and order?

All of these terms are abstractions, that have no particular context. They are mapping devices, but not actual things or places. They may help us navigate conceptually, but they can be misused.

6. How do abstractions and logic become the basis for knowledge?

Most philosophers and theoreticians work with abstractions at their supposed logical relations. They are conceptual mappers, who believe that the maps represent knowledge in its fullness. However, indigenous, nonliterate people, ordinary language philosophers, some feminists, and some existentialists, do not trust mapping systems, when they do not match their experiences. Even mapmakers themselves realize that maps have errors and are in a constant state of revision.

7. How do experience and context become a basis for knowledge?

Every person, whether experienced-based or theory-based, probably live their lives with a certain level of abstract knowledge and a certain level of contextual knowledge. On this continuum, there are people whose knowledge is mostly experience-based, at one end of a continuum, and people whose knowledge is mostly theory based.

8. Is it possible and practical to suppose that paradox, simplicity/elegance, uncertainty, relativism, chaos, mystery, and recognizing the limits of knowledge can become a way of navigating conflict?

Yes, I am suggesting that the above are the best ways for conflict workers to think about the world. Sometimes there is paradox, sometimes simplicity and elegance, sometimes uncertainty, sometimes relativism, sometimes chaos, sometimes mystery—but overall, there are limits to our knowledge.

9. How does Bergson's view of time and space create a way to experience timelessness and space-less-ness?

If we can release ourselves from the constraints of conceiving of time and space as external measuring systems, and imaging that timelessness is an intriguing "now," and space-less-ness is an intriguing connection between ourselves and the infinite "out there," then we are on our way to the Bergsonian reality. Key to this transformation is the necessity to attain peace in our lives, to escape the past that haunts us, and the future that scares us. This is not easy, and many people commit their lives to reach this kind of peace. For us ordinary mortals, whatever steps we can take in the Bergsonian direction, are positive steps toward resolving conflicts and stronger connections between us.

Part Two: Mystical Knowledge

Readings:

Huxley, A. (2021). *The doors of perception*. Strelbytskyy Multimedia Publishing.

Shrader, D. W. (2008, January). Seven characteristics of mystical experiences. In *Sixth Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities*

Key Dilemma of Part Two: Is it possible to reconcile science with mysticism?

Discussion Questions:

1. What is real? What is illusion? What is true? What are lies?

In the mainstream Western tradition, reality and truth tends to be based on physical evidence and strongly held, collective, beliefs. Following this, illusions or lies are experiences that are contrary to physical evidence and contrary to strongly held, collective beliefs.

In older and alternative traditions, reality and truth tends to be based on collective and historical experiences. Following this, illusions and lies are understood as the dogmas that are contrary to collective and historical experiences.

These two worldviews are stated in polarized summations, above, representing two ends of a continuum of the ways that cultures and people understand reality, illusion, truth, and lies. Actual cultures and people fall somewhere in the space between the ends of the continuum, depending on the level of exposure and adaptation they have to alternative views.

2. What is an altered state of consciousness?

It seems to be that, to a certain degree, consciousness is a social construction. On this view, a culture or a person has a somewhat shared "existential reality" (the reality that they experience). If a culture or person has an altered state of consciousness, their altered state is caused by a profound experience or a consciousness-altering drug or substance.

3. Is ordinary consciousness really an altered state, and is an altered state really true consciousness?

Ordinary consciousness is the one that we share with others in a culture. Therefore, for a person from a vastly different culture would consider our ordinary consciousness as an altered state. True consciousness is hard to pin down with language or abstractions. When people experience a state of consciousness that they feel is profoundly true, then they only have their experience to point to—not a linguistic summation—it is therefore an ineffable experience. However, various mystical experiences do have features in common with each other.

4. Is mysticism an element in many religions?

Yes, but not universally so.

5. Does mysticism exist in some forms of atheism?

Yes, as an example, Buddhist mystics are atheists.

6. Do psychedelic drugs engender authentic mysticism?

Some users of psychedelic drugs claim that they engender mystical experience; others claim that these experiences merely create hallucinogenic illusions.

7. Can three days in the wilderness engender authentic mysticism?

Some backpackers claim that prolonged time in the wilderness engender mystical experience; others claim that such experiences are hallucinogenic illusions.

8. Do traditional, pre-civilization, indigenous people live in a mystical reality?

A case can be made that these people live in a vastly different existential reality than modern people. Their connection to nature may be similar to the wilderness experience that backpackers sometimes have.

9. How does mysticism alter our experience of time and space?

As Henri Bergson suggests, without the external framing of time and space, one can experience timelessness (time seeming to stand still; past and future feeling close and connected) and space-lessness (space losing its expansiveness and feeling intimately close and connected).

10. How does mysticism transform conflict practices?

Conflict resolvers, who have a mystical practice, can feel, and to a degree generate, closeness and connection between disputants. This can help facilitate communication across difference, which is the goal of conflict processes.

Chapter Eight: Navigating the Difference between Indigenous Societies and Civilization; Different Concepts of Individualism

Part One: Conflict between Indigenous Societies and Civilization

Readings:

Burkhart, B. Y. (2004). What Coyote and Thales can teach us: An outline of American Indian epistemology. *American Indian thought: philosophical essays*, 15-26.

Key Dilemma of Part One: Can the fundamental worldview conflict between indigenous and civilized people be resolved, and is such a resolution necessary for global sustainability?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

As an example of the ongoing physical and cultural genocide of indigenous people, there was a report in the July 21, 2018 edition of The New York Times, p. A4, about the last remaining member of an isolated tribe in the Amazon. He has been living alone in the jungle since the "other members of his tribe died in the 1990s, probably killed by ranchers…he has responded to outsiders with hostility."

Aside from the horrors of the physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering of countless millions of indigenous people worldwide at the hands of colonists, we "civilized" people have generally lost contact with an incredibly amazing set of beliefs and practices that could guide us towards our necessary transformation to a planet in harmony with nature.

Questions:

1. What is the fundamental worldview conflict?

The fundamental worldview conflict is between, on the one side, indigenous people's commitment

to live in harmony with nature; and on the other side, civilization's commitment to use nature for human purposes, even when it is scientifically shown that such a commitment, as currently practiced, is unsustainable, and will lead us to the only human-caused species extinction, including massive human death and misery.

There are many modes of denial that keep people unconcerned about the impending climate emergency. Some people believe that humans were made in God's image, and therefore, God will protect us from extinction. Some people believe that human technology can be developed to adequately address any climate crisis

Simply, indigenous people perfected ways to live in harmony with nature, but indigenous culture and practices have been marginalized to the degree that modern civilization has generally lost track of those sustainable values and processes.

We might say that modern civilization has a set of innovative beliefs and practices, but the main weakness of our knowledge and cultural practices is that it is not likely to be sustainable because of our overriding hostility to, or disregard of, nature and our seeming lack of commitment to repair all of the damage we have done to natural ecosystems. For five to seven millions of years, indigenous people have lived in harmony with nature, now humans have forced nature to live under the subjugation of humanity. How sustainable is this?

In my opinion, the conflict between the worldviews of indigenous and civilized people must be engaged and navigated for the wisdom that can be rediscovered. I'm not saying that every indigenous belief and practice is geared to solve all of our modern problems, though I believe that many aspects of their wisdom can help us return to a greater harmony with nature, a greater sense of our identity as human beings, and a reconstruction of the kind of fully diverse communities that we need to ground our future security and morality. For me, indigenous people are the true "human beings," and modern civilized people are "prodigal beings."

For conflict resolvers, the question is how can we resolve the conflict between indigenous wisdom and the beliefs and practices of modern civilization?

2. How is the fundamental worldview conflict ignored by biases of the religious, scientific, and capitalist reductionism of modern civilization? In other words do popular forms of religious, scientific, and capitalist thinking tend to ignore this conflict and simplify the solution?

As mentioned above, there are widespread religious beliefs that people are created in the image of God, and therefore, God will not allow us to destroy ourselves and God's creation. Similarly, there is a widespread belief that technology can solve any climate or greenhouse gas imbalance. Furthermore, a

large amount of people believe that reports of impending ecological disaster are fake news. They believe the environmentalists invent dire statistics to get research grants and to pad their salaries. Unfortunately, there is another group of people, who are committed to exploiting natural resources for profit, and are not concerned with (or in denial about) the consequences of this destruction.

These four all-too-common beliefs are reductionist, in that they reduce the complexity of climate change and runaway greenhouse gases to a simple problem that either God or technology can fix—or that it is merely fake news in the interest of environmentalist power, status, and money. Or fake news from people who are jealous of the powerful economic entities that can exploit natural resources for huge profits. In fact, the view of nature as a human resource is a complex problem that have been developing since the dawn of the industrial age.

3. Can we gain environmental wisdom from this country's constitutional designers and the wisdom of Classical thinkers?

Joseph J. Ellis, a Pulitzer Prize winning author, has recently written a book, entitled *American Dialogue: The Founders and Us*. In this book, he creates a dialogue between the views of four of our constitutional founders and our contemporary concerns of racism, economic inequality, constitutional law, and foreign policy. Just as the designers of our Constitution referred back to the wisdom of ancient Greeks and Romans, Ellis attempts to draw wisdom from our founders on the issues that have created the current, seemingly unbridgeable, political divide.

Oddly, Ellis did not choose our environmental crisis as one of the four topics he chose to write about. Is there no wisdom on this topic from our countries founders? Is there no wisdom on this topic handed down from the Classical antiquity? Ellis may have had a number of reasons for not including this topic in his book, though my preliminary research suggests that one of those reasons may have been that our founders, as well as the Classical thinkers, did not have much to offer in the way of environmental wisdom; rather, just the opposite, they either encouraged climate change or were seemingly without insight in preventing environmental catastrophe.

Industrial pollution began in the Classical period. Evidence of this pollution is available within Greenland ice. "Thousands of years ago, during the height of the ancient Greek and Roman empires, lead emissions from sources such as mining and smelting of lead-silver ores in Europe drifted with the winds over the ocean to Greenland—a distance of more than 2800 miles—and settled onto the ice. Year after year, as fallen snow added layers to the ice sheet, lead emissions were captured along with dust and other airborne particles, and became part of the ice-core record that scientists use today to learn about conditions in the past… Most of the lead emissions from this time period are believed to have been linked to the production of silver, which was a key component of currency. (Desert Research Institute, May 14, 2018)

So, both the wealth generated by the industrial revolution and the use of amoral and abstract economic currency as a mode of value, demonstrate that, as written in The Holy Bible, King James Version, 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." This transformation of value from nature to money can be understood as a profound environmental mistake, made at the rise of civilization. It was also a moral mistake by assuming that amoral money has some kind of overriding value. Traditional indigenous people historically and today realize this mistake, and seek to live in harmony with nature and commit themselves to community, rather than wealth.

Furthermore, the Greeks and Romans began a campaign of environmental degradation for profitable business interests. However, the ancient Greeks had a glimmer of realization that human stewardship was failing to maintain sustainable natural ecosystems. "Plato described Attica (the Region around Athens), saying: 'What now remains, compared to what then existed, is like the skeleton of a sick man, all the fat and soft earth having wasted away, and only the bare framework of the land being left'…"

"The Romans, in contrast, took a strictly utilitarian view of their environment. The land was there to be exploited by *Homo Sapiens*. The trend toward deforestation started in Greece and spread—during the Roman Empire—from the hiss of Galilee in Palestine and the Taurus Mountains of Turkey in the east, to the mountains in Spain in the west. Various features of the Roman agricultural economy greatly encouraged this process…and their society had no counterbalancing conservation ethic."

"Both the Egyptians and Greeks were determined hunters. They forced many larger animals (such as the lions in upper Egypt and in Greece) to extinction. But the Roman Empire had a far greater destructive impact on the fauna of the ancient world than did its predecessors. Not only were animals hunted for skins, feathers, and ivory, but multitudes were captured for use in 'games'." (Anne and Paul Ehrlich, May/June 1980, Mother Earth News)

At the beginning of colonization, Europeans thought that British America was inferior because it had colder weather at the same latitudes that were warmer in Europe. The experience of colder weather on the Atlantic coast drove many early settlers back to Europe, "and in fact, the majority of 17th century colonies in North America were abandoned." In response to this concern, "Thomas Jefferson and his fellow Founding Fathers responded with patriotic zeal that their settlement was actually causing the climate to warm…in contrast to today's common association of the U.S. with climate change skepticism, it was a very different story in the 18th century." (Raphael Calel, *The Public Domain Review*, 2014/02/19, "The Founding Fathers v. The Climate Change Skeptics."

4. What happened to the wisdom of Native Americans?

Where are the voices of Native Americans in Ellis's dialogue about the crucial issues of contemporary

times? Native peoples represent a millennia worth of experience and wisdom maintaining (and sometimes self-correcting) their harmonious relationship with nature. As we now face an industrial-revolution-caused sixth earth-extinction, we must take seriously the recent report (CNN, October 30, 2018), entitled "This is the 'last generation' that can save nature, WWF says."

5. How serious is this environmental crisis?

There are a number of measures that demonstrate the catastrophic human-made extinction that is now in progress. One of them is articulated below:

CNN summarizes the World Wildlife Fund report, as follows:

> *Global wildlife populations have fallen by 60% in just over four decades, as accelerating pollution, deforestation, climate change and other manmade factors have created a "mind-blowing" crisis, the World Wildlife Fund has warned in a damning new report.*
>
> *The total numbers of more than 4,000 mammal, bird, fish, reptile, and amphibian species declined rapidly between 1970 and 2014, the Living Planet Report 2018 says.*
>
> *Current rates of species extinction are now up to 1,000 times higher than before human involvement in animal ecosystems became a factor.*
>
> *The proportion of the planet's land that is free from human impact is projected to drop from a quarter to a tenth by 2050, as habitat removal, hunting, pollution, disease, and climate change continue to spread, the organization added.*
>
> *The group has called for an international treaty, modeled on the Paris climate agreement, to be drafted to protect wildlife and reverse human impacts on nature.*
>
> *It warned that current efforts to protect the natural world are not keeping up with the speed of manmade destruction.*
>
> *The crisis is "unprecedented in its speed, in its scale and because it is single-handed," said Marco Lambertini, the WWF's director general. "It's mind–blowing. … We're talking about 40 years. It's not even a blink of an eye compared to the history of life on Earth."*
>
> *"Now that we have the power to control and even damage nature, we continue to (use) it as if we were the hunters and gatherers of 20,000 years ago, with the technology of the 21st century," he added. "We're still taking nature for granted, and it has to stop."*
>
> *WWF UK Chief Executive Tanya Steele added in a statement, "We are the first generation to know we are destroying our planet and the last one that can do anything about it."*

> *The report also found that 90% of seabirds have plastics in their stomachs, compared with 5% in 1960, while about half of the world's shallow-water corals have been lost in the past three decades.*
>
> *Animal life dropped the most rapidly in tropical areas of Latin America and the Caribbean, with an 89% fall in populations since 1970, while species that rely on freshwater habitats, like frogs and river fish, declined in population by 83%.*

This report is horrifying. And it leaves the crisis up to modern nations to solve it. Where is the wisdom of the indigenous peoples of the planet? Why are they not participating in the dialogue?

6. How different is the indigenous worldview from modern civilization?

Below is a summary of major worldview differences between natives and moderns. Parts of this list are from Brian Yazzie Burkhart and Kent Nerburn. After each individual belief, I respond with the point of view that is often embraced by mainstream Western-dominated cultures. I setting up this conflict, I am trying to emphasize how deeply Native American thought supports harmony with nature, and how Western thought is skeptical about Native beliefs. How do we resolve this conflict?

a. "*Do not begrudge the white man his presence on this land. Though he doesn't know it yet, he has come here to learn from us.*" (A Shoshone Elder)

This is in contrast to the colonist view that natives did not deserve to belong in this land.

b. *We live in eternal time* (past, present, future), *and infinite space* (here and everywhere), *not in an incremental moment or an incremental space.*

Civilization constructs time as an abstraction, where the present moment is the only thing that exists, and we can only know the expanse of space that we can physically measure.

c. *Occurrences in time and space are fluid* (subject to interpretation and contextualization), *not solid* (fixed as immobile facts).

Civilized science believes that occurrences in time and space are independent of our interpretation and contextualization.

d. *Spirit permeates all of creation; consciousness flows through everything, everywhere.*

Modern science is skeptical about terms like 'spirit' and 'consciousness', if they cannot be empirically measured. If there is a realm of spirit or consciousness that cannot be measured, then it is beyond the scope of scientific inquiry.

e. *The community of human beings and all that is natural are sacred.*

Again, modern science is skeptical about terms like 'sacred', if they cannot be empirically measured. And again, if there is a realm of spirit or consciousness that cannot be measured, it is beyond the scope of scientific inquiry.

f. *Giving is the greatest value, not acquisition, domination, status, power, and wealth.*

One can easily suppose that modern civilization is obsessed with acquisition, domination, status, power, and wealth. However, generosity is also a highly valued character trait.

g. *Limits, humility, and forgiveness are also central values.*

Here again, modern civilization may not place the highest value on limits, humility, and forgiveness, though these values are a part of the principles of most civilizations.

h. *All of our relations, with each other and the natural world, are our constant priority.*

This imperative is exactly what the civilized world needs to adopt to head off the most disastrous aspects of the sixth extinction; an extinction process that has already begun. In order to do this, we need to think about every aspect of our life and ask ourselves if we are living in harmony with the natural world or not. Clearly, we must give up our obsession and addiction to acquisition, domination, status, power, and wealth.

i. *Our first responsibility is to each other, not ourselves. Without each other, none of us can survive.*

In contrast to this view, modern civilization believes that our first responsibility is to maximize our self-interest. Even some mediation processes work from the assumption that people need to maximize their self-interest. Natives believe that the community or tribe comes first, that we should serve the group and within a healthy community, each person will flourish.

j. *Family is all those you hold close to your heart.*

This more inclusive sense of family includes all the members of one's community, for whom one has a bond, and is a much deeper commitment than modern civilization has within biological or marital families, and often excludes alienated family members, neighbors and erstwhile friends.

k. *Children and elders are held sacred because they are closest to the Creator.*

In contrast, some of the lowest paid workers are childcare and assisted living employees, demonstrating how little modern civilization regards our children and elders.

l. *Life and death are ultimately part of the Great Mystery.*

From our scientific, empirical evidence-based thinking, life is just an unusual, evolutionary accident, and death is the return of the living to the eternal death of lifeless matter. Religions try to overrule this view by supposing some supernatural realm with non-natural laws. Natives do not claim to have proof of a "happy hunting ground" after death, but they have mystical experiences of connection with the spirits, and merely suggest that we consider the cycle of life and death in all of nature, including humans, as a mystery.

m. *There are things that we should not try to know.*

Civilization has progressed by pulling apart nature to determine the dynamics of natural processes, and using that knowledge to create non-natural processes and products. The over-production of non-natural objects through non-natural processes represents one of the kinds of knowledge that we should not attempt to undertake because it undermines our ecosystems to the degree that our planet's natural diversity is destroyed, along with many species that are vital to sustainable life on earth.

n. *No person pushes their way of believing upon another.*

This is an indigenous affirmation of diversity of beliefs. In this era of identity group supremacy, where people are excluded from groups when they do not believe the same thing, we seem to be firmly in the grasp of groupthink. Indigenous people are urged to find their own individual guiding spirit, thus providing the tribe or village with multiple perspectives on the group's course forward. Single perspectives are not as flexible, when a group's future is ties to socially enforced, dogmatic perspectives.

o. *All people need to feel needed by being given roles appropriate to their talents.*

In modern civilization, many social and economic roles are made to seem superfluous, especially when automation and off-shoring jobs has made many roles extinct. Parenthood, itself, has become superfluous as the demands in the workplace become more complex and stressful.

p. *Learning is a lifelong process.*

Modern societies place learning at the beginning years, when people are too young to work, and therefore, have no idea what parts of their educational experience will be useful and important for their future life. Therefore, education seems like an abstraction for young people who do not work, and young people old enough to work often employed in lower skill jobs that likely do not match their

post-education career goals. If modern society created opportunities for young people to engage in age-appropriate work, their education could be designed to help them succeed at each level of work for which they qualify. This process of education could be life-long, as people's work capabilities and desires evolve.

q. *Indigenous culture is not a conquered or vanquished culture; rather, it is our elder culture with unique gifts to offer us as the original children of this land.*

Modern civilization has created a fiction where native peoples are simply the relics of a lost and forgotten past. Considering the often-intentional genocide of native peoples all over the planet, it is not a surprise that such a fiction has had widespread traction. In my opinion, we lose the wisdom of indigenous people at our— and our planet's—peril.

r. *People can communicate with animals, plants, rocks, earth, fire, water, clouds, and the unseen, as well as the Universe at large.*

Modern science has no way to make sense of this claim because science has developed with the assumption that there is impossible for humans to communicate with other non-human beings or natural entities, including the Universe at large. However, indigenous people have evolved in a deep and intimate connection with the natural world, where such communication occurs through this powerful connection.

s. *There are no coincidences, nor random events; all unusual events have some degree of meaningfulness.*

Again, modern science has developed a model of the natural world that is filled with random coincidences that are completely meaningless, unless people wish to project meaning onto them in superstitious and magical ways. In this way, a great divide exists between modern and indigenous people. The only bridge between these two belief systems are the supposed mystical experiences that people can have after at least three days of exposure to the wilderness. After three days, hiking through the wilderness can transform from being a person in a somewhat alien landscape to a person finding oneself walking through ones' greater mind, where levels of meaning arise from seeming "coincidences and random events."

t. *Meaningfulness, value, and morality arise constantly in the intersection between us and all that is around us.*

Following the insights from the wilderness, mystical experience, explained, above, one can find that meaning, value, and morality is not a simple human projection onto a material world that is essentially

meaningless, valueless, and amoral. This revelatory experience also illuminates the notion that our world and universe is intrinsically moral.

u. *How we behave gives shape to the world.*

Following the insights of the prior two indigenous beliefs, a world that is intrinsically moral is deeply affected by our moral, amoral, or immoral choices. We participate in making the world meaningful or meaningless.

v. *The universe is moral. Facts, truth, meaning, even our existence are normative.*

In the Western philosophical tradition, the universe is some overarching metaphysical object or subject. Following that view, the central debate seems to focus on what kind of object or subject it is–material or nonmaterial. The notion that the universe is axiological (value-laden) does not deny it's metaphysical status, but transforms the central question of existence to whether the universe is intrinsically moral (moral –in-itself, or only instrumentally moral (only moral in its use as positive or negative toward humans).

w. *We must maintain our connectedness, maintain our relations. We find our understanding through them, not abstracted from them.*

Western notions of individualism are based on abstracting individual human beings from communities and the world. Native thought finds this kind of abstraction immoral, as the moral realm depends on continuous connection to others and the world. If one's identity is abstracted from others and the world, one becomes self-serving and morality becomes a potential obstacle blocking one's achievement of individual goals.

x. Our relations, connections, and knowledge change; we must continue to cultivate them.

This belief flows the more fluid not of knowledge, that requires continuous observation of the changing world around us, nature, and people, alike. The Western view is that there are fundamental properties in the world that are constant, and the consequences of these properties can be predicted.

y. There is a constant conversation between all of the elements of nature. Humans are part of the conversation, but they do not control it, nor dominate it.

Native thought emphasizes this notion of ongoing conversation amongst fellow humans, and the various natural elements and species around us. This conversation illuminates possibilities and paths to take, going forward. On this view, control and domination are not necessary, and are immorally harsh ways of interacting with others and nature.

Western thought has difficulty with the idea that we humans can have a conversation with nature, just as Western thought has difficulty embracing, or even understanding, many—if not most—of the Native beliefs listed above. How can we resolve this difference? What kind of conversation can Western thinkers have with Native thinkers?

7. In our mainstream culture, how strong is the imperative to seek harmony with nature?

In my observation, there is a wide continuum of thought within mainstream and counter-narrative thought. On the one end, there are people who believe it is not up to us to live in harmony with nature; rather it is up to us to force nature to live in harmony with us. Others, at this end of the continuum, believe that the previous view is the same as God's intent from Creation—when God decreed that humans have dominion over nature. Also, at this end of the continuum, are those who believe that problems like global warming, species extinction, and runaway greenhouse gases, have technological solutions. Sadly, there are those who want to exploit natural resources for maximum monetary profit, without concern for the environmental consequences. All of these beliefs do not require any imperative to seek harmony with nature; rather our religious and scientific resources should aim at forcing nature to live in harmony with us.

At the other end of the continuum are those indigenous people, environmentalists, and counter-cultural people, who are strongly committed to living in harmony with nature, and advocating cultural, political, moral, and legal methods of persuading broader support for this view.

Part Two: Different Concepts of Individualism

Readings:

Moeller, H. G. (2004). New Confucianism and the semantics of individuality. a Luhmannian analysis. *Asian Philosophy*, *14*(1), 25-39.

Key Dilemma in Part Two:

- How do we reconcile individualism with commitments to the common good?
- These conflicts arise for seemingly any person who does not suffer from a sociopathic personality disorder.

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

"The challenge of finding language that is true to traumatic experience is, however, a daunting one. How can we speak about the unspeakable without attempting to render it intelligible and sayable? The paradoxes of traumatic memory may seem to defy analysis. Our ordinary concepts of time and identity cease to apply, as in the French writer Charlotte Delbo's statement, "I died in Auschwitz, but no one knows it. (1995, 267) For months after my assault, I had to stop myself before saying (what seemed accurate at the time), "I was murdered in France last summer." In this book…I develop and defend a view of the self as fundamentally relational—capable of being undone by violence, but also of being remade in connection with others." (Susan J. Brison, *Aftermath*, p xi, 2002)

Inclusive and Exclusive Individuality (Hans-Georg Moeller):

Inclusive individuality places the self at the "center of relationships" and gives the self a sense of holistic unity.

Exclusive individuality isolates the self, as superior to relationships, and only allows partial social inclusion, depending on the functional role played by the individual. No one has a full sense of holistic unity. No one is merely a center of relationships.

The *transformation* from inclusive individuality to exclusive individuality has occurred globally because of the functional differentiation of modern societies.

"[N]o society can take part in functional differentiation while escaping the consequence of splitting the individual." (Moeller 37)

This splitting of the individual into multiple social roles and functions has caused two unsolvable problems:

internally conflicted multiple selves;

homme copie—imitational person.

Is there a Post-Confucian, post-individualist, post-humanist resolution to the unsolvable problems above?

Individualism and the Meaning of Life (Gregory Baum and Etty Hillesum)

Baum and Hillesum suggest that *individualism* is to blame for our dread of death, life's meaninglessness and alienation, as well as our seeking individual pleasures at the expense of others.

They recommend finding meaning from our compassionate solidarity with others. This solidarity will reduce our dread of death and our feelings of alienation.

Is individualism an *evil,* or should one find a *balance* between individualism and communitarianism?

The Self as Relational (Susan J. Brison)

Brison is sympathetic with the view that the self is relational. On this view, "[T]he self is created and sustained by others and, thus, is able to be destroyed by them." (p. 62)

However, the autonomy of the self requires us to make choices that, at least in part, construct a unique

self—against the pressures to conform to the wishes of others. In other words, to have an autonomous self, we must, at least sometimes, make choices against our relationships with others.

In speaking of her son, Brison states, “He is the embodiment of my life’s new narrative and I am more autonomous by virtue of being so intermingled with him.” (p. 66) This sounds like a description of a dangerously enmeshed relationship. How can she find autonomy here?

Chapter Nine: Navigating Nonviolence and Violence; Pacifism and War

Part One: Violence and Nonviolence

Readings:

https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/08/10/the-american-soul-is-a-murderous-soul-guns-violence-second-amendment-trump/

Ryan, C. (1994). The One Who Burns Herself for Peace. *Hypatia*, *9*(2), 21-39.

Key Dilemma of Part One:

How do we know when interpersonal violence is justified? If one says that interpersonal violence is justified in some cases, what are the cases, and how are they justified? If one says that interpersonal violence is never justified, how can one justify not defending oneself or others?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

Quote: "All the other stuff, the love, the democracy, the floundering into lust, is a sort of by-play. **The essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer. It has never yet melted**."

(my emphasis) D. H. Lawrence (1923)

Personal Stories: A few years ago, I was called to perform "jury duty." Oddly, the video that was played soon after my initial arrival talked about this nation's justice system as a "system of conflict resolution." As soon as I was called onto just one jury pool, I was quickly eliminated when the attorney asked what I did: I said, "Conflict resolution." He said, "Excused." This serves to remind us that the boundaries around the term, "conflict resolution," are vague and blurry—a real muddle! Attorneys tend to call what

they do “conflict resolution;” I call what they do “adversarial, trauma enhancement.” I call what we do “conflict resolution;” they call what we do “a touchy-feely waste of time.”

With the above paragraph, I have set the tone by my ongoing frustration with the mainstream U.S. culture’s seemingly unquestioned acceptance of brutality in domestic and international “justice.” When we think about the role of conflict resolution in regards to violence and nonviolence, should we think of conflict resolution as one means to resolve conflicts, amongst other more violent, though supposedly legitimate means? In other words, when faced with conflict, should we use conflict resolution sometimes, and more violent and traumatic ways of addressing conflict at other times? Depending on the situation?

A lawyer friend of mine calls our court system, “kicking ass between four walls.” Having witnessed both jury and civil trials, it is pretty obvious that they are not about finding a resolution based on understanding, connection, or truth. Trials are essentially popularity contests. Which attorney is most appealing? Which attorney presents the best narrative that links the evidence? Popularity contests do not embody the values of either justice or resolution.

And then there is war… “When war is declared, truth is the first casualty.” (Ponsonby, 1928) What else need we say? War cannot be a kind of conflict resolution because it does not even try to understand the other side. War is the practice of eliminating “enemies,” along with the innocents nearby (collateral damage), in hopes that it will intimidate and scare the “bad” people into submission. Then there are genocidal wars that eliminate the conflict by eliminating the people. The warfare and criminal justice systems justify brutality in the name of state power because we assume that Hobbes was right in his assertion that, without a dominant state power, chaos and anarchy would take hold, and life would return to a state of nature, “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” (Hobbes, Chapter 12, Leviathan, 1651)

Questions:

1. How is the American soul a murderous soul?

Blanchfield, (writing in foreignpolicy.com) argues that “a majority of Americans apparently find no cognitive dissonance” between, first, loving what America projects to the world in terms of democracy, freedom, and compassion for the poor and oppressed; and, second, realizing that “our way of life is certainly structured around violence and around selectively empowering, quarantining, directing, and monetizing it at home and abroad.” (Blanchfield, p. 10) The characteristic default to the first proposition, and denial of the second, constitutes a cognitive dissonance that consistently rejects the latter.

“[I]n a nation that is as segregated as the United States remains to this day, the concentration of violence

in crowded ghettos and benighted postindustrial areas should be unsurprising. Americans have a history of citing violence as the cause of their racial prejudices. But the reality is that anti-black racism is itself the defining feature of the institutions and social pressures that generate everyday violence in the United States." (Blanchfield, p. 7) This means that the majority of Americans blame African Americans and other marginalized peoples for the violence in our country, rather than understanding that persistent racism and scapegoating has created the conditions for violence amongst these people. This is similar to blaming Native Americans for their violent defense against European colonists and settlers, rather than the genocidal policies of an expanding America, which granted little recognition that this country was already populated by dignified natives, who lived much more sustainably and in harmony with nature than both colonial culture and current mainstream culture.

2. How is conflict resolution related to violence and nonviolence?

Given the brutal ways of addressing domestic and international conflict, we might think of conflict resolution as pretty much the *only* appropriate way to address conflict. Sure, we might want to accept that violent self-defense, locking up the criminally insane in hospital, or last-resort police actions are sometimes justifiable, but what other kinds of violence are ethically defensible? I suggest that the violence of the court system, the prison system, and the war system, are unethical, immoral, and perhaps downright evil.

Unfortunately, the muddle begins when we delve back into the "world of perceptions"—where we conflict workers must spend a lot of our time. Some, perhaps most, people think that my insights about the court, prison, and war systems are just my opinion, my perception. Their perception is that the court system is society's "self-defense system" and "police action," and therefore justifiable. Furthermore, their view is that war is also society's "self-defense system" and "police action," and therefore justifiable. So, the question that arises from this muddle is how do these two views engage each other? Additionally, some violent revolutions deliver more just and democratic governments by overthrowing genocidal dictatorships.

For me, the answer to these complications about the role of violence within societies and between societies is that we must engage other viewpoints on terms that promote understanding between the two sides. No matter how "true" our position might be, it will be perceived as untrue and alienating to those with dramatically different experiences.

Playing the "truth card," is not going to win the game of understanding—and, of course, understanding is not a game, nor something that we win. Finding terms that promote understanding depends on a lot of variables: the other person's temperament, culture, mood, education, political leanings, religion, etc. There can be no general rule for each person's particularity. Finding the grounds for understanding between two parties is always a unique undertaking. Oddly, using persuasive tactics is usually the least

persuasive way of approaching someone who disagrees. Rather, listening to the other person's concerns and experiences is ultimately the best way to persuade—and be persuaded. Furthermore, bicultural and multicultural people have a distinct advantage over mon-cultural people because they have experiences that are not bounded by a single culture. They can see through many cultural lenses when they have been exposed to them throughout their lives.

3. What is violated in violence?

Using violence against others is taking something away from them that they cherish: themselves, those they love, or causes permanent bodily damage or suffering. Contact sports are ruled out, as the suffering that may happen, within the rules of the sport, is part of the risk of participation. **Violence violates human decency**, and cannot be justified to prevent property loss, or damage, or the undermining of some principle, unless that damage, or violation of the principle, leads to someone's loss of life or causes grievous suffering.

4. Is self-defense, and the defense of others, justified?

Preventing the violation to oneself or another is arguably justified with the minimal amount of force needed. One should be trained in arming oneself with nonviolence, but also be capable of using the appropriate level of force required when nonviolent techniques fail.

Further Questions:

1. What is nonviolent communication? How can communication be violent

2. Should we think about nonviolence as a kind of healing, rather than simply avoiding violence? Furthermore, shouldn't healing go beyond the alleviation of suffering and include making others whole, while also making ourselves whole?

Part Two: Pacifism and War

Readings:

Gould, Robert (2010) “Are Pacifists Cowards? A Consideration of this Question in Reference to Heroic Warrior Courage” The Acorn. v.14 Issue 1 pp 19-26 Link to text

Key Dilemma for Part Two:

- How do we know when military violence is justified?
- If one is a pacifist, then military violence will never be justified, but couldn’t we imagine a circumstance when it would be justified, such as when a population is victimized by genocidal violence?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

“I was 18 years old and an apprentice-printer at Wanganui Herald, and New Zealand had been at war [WW II] for two years. Knowing my position on the war [conscientious objector], some of my work mates petitioned the manager with a demand for my dismissal. A parishioner abused me publicly in church, calling me a coward and a traitor. A favorite uncle of mine said, “I won’t condemn you Merv, I’ll leave that up to God.” (Browne, 2006, p.221)

Merv Browne’s experiences (above), along with many other pacifist experiences, including my own, create the impetus for this paper. Therefore, my work here is dedicated to all pacifists and peace education programs that hang under a cloud of suspicion concerning the perception of cowardice entailed within pacifism.

Gould Essay: Pacifism and the Problem of Courage and Cowardice

"If you ever die a hero's death, Heaven protect the angels"

"Since the greatest test of courage is the readiness to make the greatest sacrifice, the sacrifice of one's life, and since the soldier is required by his profession to be always ready for this sacrifice, the soldier's courage was and somehow remained the outstanding example of courage."(Tillich, 1952, p. 5)

"Do you believe that a coward can ever disobey a law that he dislikes? . . . Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister." (Gandhi, 1951, p. 51)

Introduction

The charge that pacifists are cowardly is powerfully discrediting because of the long-popular view that heroic, warrior courage is the virtue that most accurately expresses moral strength. In the following, I seek to replace the view of *courage as central to moral strength* with the view that *lifelong nonviolent moral commitments more accurately express moral strength*. Further, I suggest that the issue of courage or cowardice is largely irrelevant to the centrality of moral commitments within the moral life.

The Shadow of Cowardice

The virtues of pacifism occur in two parts: first, pacifists (to varying degrees) *reject* war and violence; second, they (to varying degrees) *affirm* nonviolent communication and conflict resolution. However, pacifism still suffers under the shadow of cowardice. To many, pacifists are, on some level, cowardly—they do not have real courage—the courage to engage in combat. The suspicion is that pacifists, at least partly, desire the safer and less risky path. Even though some pacifists express their commitment to nonviolence through campaigns of nonviolent resistance, and these actions entail a certain measure of risk, these risks are usually not like charging into the bullet-and-explosive-filled jaws of war. On the other hand, the warrior image of courage is one of violently aggressive, fearless risk-taking in a just cause.

For those who promote peace studies and conflict resolution, the undercurrent of perceived cowardice may undermine our best attempts to advocate for a peaceful resolution to conflict. This perception of cowardice is made worse given the preference for adversarial justice over negotiated settlements because of the bias that many cultures have towards "caring enough to fight it out"—letting the stronger person or position fight it out on the battlefield, the courtroom, or even in a paper presentation at an academic conference. However, this "fight it out" approach to conflict leads to win/lose outcomes that often submerge legitimate differences, as opposed to negotiated win/win resolutions that allow legitimate differences to see the light of day.

Personal Stories

I became a pacifist and conscientious objector during the Vietnam War. Immediately thereafter, I became a draft counselor and peace activist. I wrote my PhD dissertation in philosophy on the moral strength of pacifism, and founded a peace studies program.

My best friend during the late 1960s—and still a close friend today—also became a pacifist and conscientious objector during that war. Interestingly, he has had a long career demonstrating his courage as an emergency medical technician, as well as a member of a mountain rescue team. Neither of us has any regrets about opposing the Vietnam War, nor about a lifetime of affirming the pacifist position through careers of compassion. Nonetheless, we both seem to have had a need to overcome a lingering self-perception of cowardice. Consequently, we have developed moral commitments that have, at times, placed us in harm's way—though nothing like the vulnerability of combat.

To overcome this suspicion, pacifists often find credibility by putting themselves in harm's way through their steadfast moral commitments. Key examples of this phenomenon are the famous nonviolent resistors, whether a Berrigan, King, Gandhi, or Chavez, who have—to a certain degree—overcome this cloud of cowardice in just this way. By placing themselves in harm's way, the moral commitments of nonviolent resisters often provoke a violent response because these commitments trigger the reactivity of the enforcers of structural injustice and oppression. Furthermore, their willingness to endure violence helps them be perceived as heroes, the supposed quintessential embodiment of overcoming moral weakness with moral strength. Gandhi (1951) expresses this view, by perhaps underestimating the courage of soldiers, in the following:

Wherein is courage required—in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon, or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior—he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend, or he who controls the death of others?

As Gandhi suggest above, nonviolent resistance seems to overcome the shadow of cowardice when it conforms to our notion of heroic courage. This sense of courage embodies a turning point in dramatic and risk-filled circumstances. Against this drama of turning point heroism as moral strength, I suggest that courage, however laudable, should not be considered the central concern of the moral life. In my analysis, the moral life is one filled with moral commitments that do not necessarily have anything to do with courage. The essence of a moral life is not the dramatic struggle to overcome moral weakness with moral strength. Rather, the ordinary day-to-day moral commitments of a moral life are not necessarily dramatic at all. They are incremental efforts that, taken one-by-one, are quite ordinary and relatively stress-free. They are noteworthy when considered collectively, rather than individually, over an entire lifetime.

Moral Courage is a Special Case of Moral Strength

On this view, the answer to the question, "Are pacifists cowards?" is that courage or cowardice is irrelevant to the rejection of war and violence. That rejection is based on the belief that there are nonviolent ways to resolve human conflict that can be achieved through compassionate commitments and careers that aim to overcome injustice and heartlessness. These commitments and careers rarely, if ever, involve mortal risks, nor the dramatic overcoming of moral weakness with heroic courage.

To support my position, outlined above, I suggest that moral courage is a special case of moral strength, rather than its archetypal expression. The vast majority of expressions of moral strength are not instances of courage, but rather day-to-day moral commitments. On this view, moral courage is expressed in rare circumstances when a person or people act ethically at some considerable risk to themselves, physically, emotionally, or psychologically. When an ethical choice looms, courage is expressed by doing something that is difficult and risky against the cowardly path that appears easier and safer.

It is interesting to note that philosophers use the term, "moral courage" to avoid the implication that criminal or self-serving courage is a good thing. The courage and daring of criminals and narcissists certainly entails a kind of strength or heart, but not one that is moral. Amoral or immoral courage fits the definition of acting at some considerable risk, physically, emotionally, or psychologically—against the easier and safer cowardly choice. On this analysis, courage or cowardice is the ability to express "heart" in daring circumstance. But, "heart" is not necessarily moral. In other words, what makes courage moral is not the courage part, but the moral part. One's morality is not necessarily "tested" in dangerous circumstances. Rather, the far more comprehensive test of one's morality is the strength of one's lifelong moral commitments and practices.

Moral Weakness

The argument in this paper addresses the tension between two different views of the problem of moral weakness. Both views spring from the insight that morality without strength is ineffective. Kidder expresses this view (on the side of courage) as follows: "In defining moments of our lives . . . values count for little without the willingness to put them into practice. Without moral courage, our brightest virtues rust from lack of use. With it, we build piece by piece a more ethical world." (2005, p.4)

However, two views diverge from one another on what counts as "defining moments." One view assumes that those defining moments require heroic courage—and the presence or absence of this virtue is the true test of moral strength. The other view assumes that those defining moments are quite ordinary moments of ongoing, lifelong moral commitments—and the presence of those commitments count as the test of moral strength. A reasonable third, and plausible, view is that both can count as the test of moral strength—or maybe two types of moral strength: one reactive and one proactive. Though the third view is reasonable enough, I am arguing that the second view should be the predominant test for moral strength because the opportunities for expressing moral courage are generally quite rare. Furthermore, an

analysis of someone's moral courage is complicated by the fact that a courageous act may be motivated by the thrill of the risk, rather than the moral benefit.

With this grounding, I turn to an examination of two key features of moral courage to show how moral commitment is a better test of moral strength. First, I look at the dramatic turning point element of moral courage against the incremental improvement element of moral commitment. Second, I examine the contrast between the element of reactivity in moral courage and the element of pro-activity in moral commitment.

Dramatic Turning Point Element of Moral Courage vs. Incremental Improvement Element of Moral Commitment

There is a long history (back to, at least, Aristotle) of thinking that courage is intimately connected to battlefield heroism. From this perspective, one either has the courage to fight or is a coward. Courage is understood as a binary *turning point* in battle—turning toward the courageous, or turning away in cowardice. This turning point is dramatic, just as the violence of war is dramatic. Therefore, this view of courage has attained archetypal status—our moral character is determined in these "defining moments of our lives." However, thinking of courage, and even violence, as a dramatic turning point does not fit many ordinary contexts. For a great number of contexts, moral activity occurs on a continuum, with small incremental steps differentiating the more moral to the less moral. (Interestingly, violence and nonviolence can also be expressed on a continuum of actions that are more violent to actions that are less violent.) In the considerations that follow, the use of these two continua seem to be quite helpful because incremental improvement is attainable in our day-to-day lives, whereas dramatic moral heroism is only tested in the rarest of circumstances.

Contemporary moral considerations of the connection between courage and violence seem to turn on examples such as the following: If one finds oneself trying to protect someone from violence, and the only way to defend that person appears to be violence, then it seems logical that violence is the way to demonstrate one's care and compassion for a potential victim, as well as practically defending someone from harm. To be violent, in such a case, means to put oneself in harm's way. Taking on such vulnerability takes courage. However, interceding nonviolently in this same scenario also requires courage because one is also placing oneself in harm's way—perhaps more so. A pacifist may wish to re-describe this example by saying that nonviolence intends not only to protect potential victims, but potential perpetrators as well.

Unfortunately, there are times when potential victims and potential perpetrators cannot both be protected from the violence at hand. In these cases, one must choose to protect the person about to be victimized, rather than the perpetrator. Key to such examples is that courage has an object (showing care and protecting people and/or a principle, while being vulnerable). Different pacifists might prioritize the

object of their courage differently: one can prioritize the courage to save someone over the courage of one's convictions; or one can prioritize one's principles over the survival of victims. Similarly, nonviolence often seems to have a similar object (showing care and protecting people, as well as making a stand against violence). In both courage and nonviolence, one must put one's moral convictions into practice. This at-risk conception of courage turns on the supposition that one is neither courageous (nor nonviolent) when one is comfortably invulnerable.

High Noon

To help illustrate this picture of courage, let us turn to something more specific. In the film, *High Noon*, the sheriff is about to be shot by the villain, and the sheriff's wife, a lifelong pacifist Quaker, shoots the villain—her only choice to save her husband. Her violence shows both how much she cares for her husband and her courage to do whatever is necessary to save him. She faces a turning point: turning to violence requires courage; turning away from violence could be seen as cowardice. We think of her as having courage because she put herself at risk, and also because she was capable of abandoning one principle for another more important principle, the protection of an innocent from death. On further reflection, if she had refused to use violence, we are likely to consider her to be rigidly principled, rather than cowardly because a coward is not able to do what she thinks is right—and in the sheriff's wife's case, if she resists violence, even at her husband's demise, she has still done what she thought was right.

In this way, strict adherence to absolute pacifism can be thought of as rigidly principled, just as adherence to absolute truth (as Kant suggests) can be thought of as rigidly principled when telling a lie might save an innocent life. Though moral courage does not necessarily require violence, it does take courage to put oneself at risk and turn away from a safer path. However, being rigidly principled does not mean one is cowardly; this is because a rigidly principled person is more concerned about holding principles tightly rather than worrying about impending personal harm. Furthermore, it is important to note that, in most situations, our care for others and our commitment to help them on principle does not require violence or courage—it simply requires ordinary kinds of nonviolent aid.

Violence-Refusal Pacifism

In light of highly unusual cases, such as the *High Noon* example, where violence *alone* can provide aid, absolute pacifists' refusal to be violent may be highly principled, but their adherence to principle has weakened their ability to do what it takes to protect someone fully. It is logically consistent for an absolute pacifist not to make such a commitment to protect others if such protection requires violence. This violence-refusal conception of pacifism has prioritized the principle of nonviolence as its object over the protection of potential victims *by any means available*. Violence-refusal pacifists certainly cannot be faulted for their principles when their nonviolent intervention demonstrates their care and compassion for a potential victim.

Minimal Violence Pacifism

However, if violence can save someone from being victimized, and nonviolence cannot, violence-refusal pacifism appears disconnected from the strongest conception of moral strength, where the protection of potential innocent victims is the central moral object, and principles must be flexible so as not to obstruct one's commitment to this seemingly highest of moral objects.

To make the strongest moral commitment fully consistent with pacifism, it seems necessary that pacifists think of their interventions as showing care and compassion, as well as protecting innocents from perpetrators by doing whatever it takes—as nonviolently as possible—to accomplish that end. On this formulation of minimal-violence pacifism, a pacifist is only violent in response to exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.

Turning-Point Conception of Courage

Interestingly, we have applied the *turning-point* conception of courage to these considerations, rather than the *incremental* conception of moral strength. We have used an example where one is courageous by *turning* to violence; otherwise, we err by relying single-mindedly on nonviolence and refusing to *turn* to violence. I question the reliance on such a conception of turning-points in our consideration of moral strength and nonviolence, first, because the cases demanding such turning-points are so rare, and second, because they tend to rule out the fact that each of us normally experiences moral commitment and nonviolence incrementally along a continuum, not a turning point. As we seek moral improvement in our ordinary lives, we generally are capable of becoming only a little bit more moral, a little bit more ethically strong, and a little bit more nonviolent.

One reason for the predominance of the turning-point conception is that it seems to arise largely in dramatic, reactive situations—ones that are generally filled with violence or the potential for violence. In these situations, our concerns focus on such questions as: How should we react to a potentially violent crime or war? This reactive, warrior mode of thinking has dominated both our understanding of courage, but also popular considerations of nonviolence as a life ethic. Popular worries include: Are we courageous enough to turn to violence? Will we react violently, if necessary? Will our nonviolence be enough to address a violent crime? My goal in this work is to switch the central focus of moral strength and nonviolence from reactivity to pro-activity, from turning-point (either/or) to incremental (on a continuum), from sporadic heroism to lifelong moral commitments, toward a more ethical life, and away from a preoccupation with potentially violent situations.

It is important to note that my work here is not intended to make an extended argument *against* violence-rejection pacifism, in favor of a minimally-violent pacifism. However, the possibility that violence-rejection pacifism can put one in the, admittedly rare, circumstance of choosing principle over

preventing harm to someone, I will be using the minimally-violent incremental conception of pacifism in the following considerations of the relationship between pacifism, courage, and moral strength. I choose to use the minimally-violent conception of pacifism because I believe that it is at the heart of the moral life—a life of compassion and moral commitment.

In discussing the nature of pacifism so far, we have assumed that pacifism, like moral strength is, in most cases, probably best described as *incremental*, rather than *turning-point* or *either/or*. On this view, one is capable of having moral strength at a *certain level*, at a *certain time*, just as one is capable of being nonviolent at a certain level, at a certain time. This view isolates the turning point conception of heroic courage as a special case of moral strength, rather than as its more typical case. In this way the polarized, *either/or* notion that we are either courageous or cowardly is not usefully applied to our place on the continuum of moral strength.

Reactive Moral Courage vs. Proactive Moral Commitment

With these points reasonably settled, we can move on to the distinction between reactive courage and proactive courage. Key to this distinction is that we (in, at least, European/American culture) have a bias in favor of violent, reactive courage that is fueled by a romantic conception of redemptive violence, while losing sight of the gruesome reality of violence, and the commonplace success of nonviolent interventions. Further, I suggest that proactive courage is best understood as an ongoing moral commitment that is both nonviolent and the embodiment of true moral strength.

I offer a further refinement of moral courage toward a more fully realized virtue, where it is best understood as being informed by a *proactive moral commitment*, not merely the classical sense of the heroic. To support this assertion, I suggest using the term, "reactive moral courage," to refer to heroic *responses* to danger, injustice, and adversity, and the term, "proactive moral strength," to refer to having *moral commitments* that give one's life more than momentary moral vitality, connection, community, and meaning.

As we humans make the slow, painful transition from a warrior identity to a civil identity, our concept of moral strength also seems to be transitioning from the metaphors of *battlefield courage* to lifelong *civil moral commitments*. We might mark this distinction as a shift from reactive courage, typified by being *heroically responsive* to instances of danger, injustice, adversity, to a proactive moral strength, illustrated by one's *lifelong moral commitments*—a truly strong civic virtue.

Vernon Baker's and Joey Cheek's Heroism

As an illustration of this shift from reactive courage to proactive moral strength, a documentary about Vernon Baker, the "only living black World War II veteran to receive the Medal of Honor—the nation's

highest distinction for battlefield heroism…", shown in conjunction with the 2006 Winter Olympics, framed the narrative of Vernon Baker as a prelude to the greater narrative of Martin Luther King Jr. The connection between a military hero/Medal of Honor winner is not too distant from Olympic hero/medal winner—as there continues to be Olympic heroes, there continues to be war heroes. However, the Martin Luther King style, proactive moral courage of Olympic heroes has become increasingly important. This was exemplified by the way that Joey Cheek, gold medal speed skater, became one of the most respected USA Olympians because he donated his prize money ($40,000) to refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan [NPR story].

A National Champion Swimmer

The following example may help make this transition from battlefield courage to civil moral commitment clearer. A friend of mine was vacationing in Hawaii and had come down to the beach to sunbathe and play in the surf. In the distance, she observed a swimmer being pulled out to sea and the situation seemed so fearful to her that she froze. She was a national champion swimmer, but she could not overcome her fear of being pulled out to sea too—if she were to undertake a rescue alone (as a classic hero might). Instead, she alerted a group of local surfers, who collectively performed the rescue, averting a tragedy. Her action embodied a civil (cooperative) moral commitment that fit her ongoing care and concern for others around her, without necessitating what might have been her own catastrophic risk.

How should we think about her courage? She shrank from a fearful situation. She did not take a great risk that someone else with her ability—and heroic courage—might have taken. Within the context of virtue ethics, she failed to show heroic courage. However, as ocean lifeguards know, individual water rescues, even with a floatation device, are terribly dangerous, particularly if the victim, in a panic, overpowers the rescuer. My friend's reluctance was completely reasonable. She might have thought of herself as too weak, morally, to take such a risk. She also might have thought that she had a character defect, inadequate virtue, and a moral weakness that undermined her ability to translate an ethical rule or perspective into action. However, these kinds of judgments arise from what occurs on the *center stage* of the dramatic focus–the potential drowning. What occurs *off stage* of the dramatic focus—in this case, her moral commitment to find appropriate help–is often not given its deserved weight. A true coward would not have taken any responsibility for a role in the rescue, and might have pretended not to notice the danger the swimmer was in. Her reaction was to find the best possible way to save the swimmer, which in this case, was to find a team of local surfers who knew the waters and could act as a group.

Center-Stage Heroes and Off-Stage Moral Strength

This example, and others I have observed, has contributed to my wondering why I don't seem to know any traditional heroes, whereas I know many people with what I call "moral strength." The people that I admire have strong moral commitments that span many years and promise to span their lifetime.

Interestingly, their moral strength seems to be expressed by their *entire life*, rather than *isolated acts*. The heroes that I read about seem distant and aloof—they don't work shoulder to shoulder with me in the peace movement, or with the people I admire. These center-stage heroes receive recognition and their acts are often touted as the very center of morality. The people with off-stage moral commitments, that I know, work in almost complete anonymity and their acts are hardly noticed in the sway of moral discourse. Where the history of heroes occupies center stage, the offstage history of people with lifetime moral commitments is underrated, overlooked, or denied.

From this observation, I began to wonder if the moral commitments of the nonviolent activists that I admire might lead us past a mere critique of heroic courage toward an alternative centering of morality. Though the support necessary for a universal claim of such magnitude is beyond the scope of this work, I do suggest that such reasoning about the moral strength of those with moral commitments is meaningful within my experience. Others may find this to also be meaningful within their experience.

Proactive Ethical Action

Within this critique, I am making three interlocking claims about proactive ethical action. First, in terms of lifetime moral commitments, proactive moral strength is more fully moral than reactive heroic courage. Second, ongoing moral commitments are more fully moral than isolated heroic acts. And third, ordinary morality—made up of moral commitments—is more fully moral than extraordinary morality—made up of heroic acts. I am suggesting that, while reactive heroic courage may be moral, proactive moral strength is a more filled-out morality because it is expressed through lifetime moral commitments.

Norma Rae and T.E. Lawrence

To illustrate these three contrasts in dramatic terms, I urge the reader to consider the lives of two people, Norma Rae, textile labor organizer, and T. E. Lawrence, English military adventurer and author.

The image of Norma Rae has always been more powerful to me than the image of Lawrence of Arabia. Norma Rae was an ordinary textile worker who simply made a commitment to help her co-workers by organizing a labor union. She was an ordinary person, with ordinary limitations and fears, but she had an important commitment in her life to help those close to her and those she worked with. She had her weaknesses that prevented her from rising to the heroic in certain crises, but she maintained what I suggest we call the "heraic" through ongoing commitments that slowly built a better life for those around her. She is like so many others whose commitments are rarely noticed. In terms of the three contrasts just introduced, she had moral strength, she had ongoing moral commitments and those commitments, combined with her ordinary off-stage live, gave her an ordinary morality that rises above extraordinary courage.

On the other hand, Lawrence of Arabia was an extraordinary person, seemingly unlimited and fearless who, in his zest for adventure, both helped and harmed others. He was capable of great heroism and great vengefulness, alternately and episodically. His presence demanded center stage, but his moral accomplishments were undermined by his tendency toward violent frenzies. He is cast in the mold of the classical hero, courageous, yet somehow cold and inhuman. Interestingly, his adventurism sprang from his leisure class upbringing—the only class that can easily afford this kind of romanticism.

In terms of the three contrasts, T. E. Lawrence had a heroic courage that was not consistently moral, nor consistently strong. He engaged in acts of heroism that were episodic and unpredictable. And the drama of his actions expressed an extraordinary morality that raises moral difficulties not present in the ordinary morality of Norma Rae. Not surprisingly, Lawrence's drama was a ruling class drama and Norma Rae's drama was a working-class drama. It seems that ruling class dramas, such as Lawrence's, are historically and conceptually privileged over working-class dramas.

Julia Ruutilla

Closer to home, a lifelong social and political activist in my hometown, Portland, Oregon, Julia Ruutilla, never pushed herself forward; she just kept doing all the little things that made a difference. Unknown to almost everyone, but those she helped, she was not cast in the hero mold—far from it! Rather, she was cast in the *hera* mold–warm, human and engaged in ongoing moral commitments.

Compare her life to that of Abbie Hoffman. He made a reputation for himself even while using a false name and plastic surgery to mask his identity. He fit the hero mold–complete with frenzies of his own. His episodic life was almost always center stage. And his suicide was simply the last scene in a self-consciously public life. Undoubtedly, Abbie Hoffman did good works. However, his eccentricities often undermined those good works. My key point is that he did not demonstrate the consistency of an ongoing moral commitment—and there was something a bit cold and inhuman about him. He achieved the heroic, but failed to achieve the *heraic*.

The reader has probably noticed that I have contrasted female experiences against male experiences. This is no accident. I suggest that heroic courage is predominantly dramatized as male experience and that moral strength, in the form of ongoing moral commitments, tends to be more central to undramatized female experience. Even though it could be argued that there is something heroic about Norma Rae and Julia Ruutilla, I use the term *heraic* to show the contrast between the expressions of consistent, proactive strength, against the expression of sporadic, superhuman, reactive capability.

The Film, "Hero"

This contrast is unwittingly dramatized in the film *Hero* starring Dustin Hoffman, Andy Garcia and

Geena Davis. The two clearly morally-flawed male characters compete on center stage for the moniker "hero"—savior of those trapped in a burning jetliner; while the two female background characters, with obvious moral strength, either do not have their commitments recognized or are mentioned in throw-away lines.

In creating an alternate perspective on courage, I find support in the work of Josiah Royce (1908) in *The Philosophy of Loyalty.* Royce has been particularly useful in helping me understand the importance of proactive commitment in morality. Where he uses the term, "loyalty," I use the closely associated term *commitment* to overcome the problem he recognized that "war and loyalty have been, in the past, two very closely associated ideas [,] . . .[an] ancient and disastrous association." For Royce, loyalty (or commitment) is generated as a Hegelian synthesis of inner drive and outer social will. Without such a synthesis, one is cast at sea to be tossed about between the contrary forces of conformity and rebellion. With such a synthesis, conflicts of inner and outer are resolved in loyalty (commitment). As Royce said, "the loyal have known what it was to be free from moral doubts and scruples. Their cause has been their conscience." Furthermore, "[w]here there is an object of loyalty [commitment], there is, then, a union of several selves into one life." And finally, "to be in charge of life is always an occasion for loyalty."

Royce's analysis of loyalty nicely fits my experience of people with lifelong nonviolent proactive moral commitments. They are not tossed about by the cycle of conformity and rebellion. They are not immobilized by moral doubt. They express a union of several sub-selves in the creation of a strong moral identity. They are in charge of their life and their cause is their conscience. However, this does not mean that they are free of character defect. They may be unable to take great risks, overcome great fears, or endure potential violence. They may simply be engaged in a meaningful, moral life.

My worries about the heroic start with the feminist critique; however, feminism often offers only a negative critique, whereas I develop a positive alternative though the notion of the heraic—lifelong moral commitments. Without a positive alternative, many feminist critiques lose force. It is left open to the challenge that we may not like everything about the heroic, but it is all we have to engage us. I believe that just offstage we have something far.

Conclusion

In summary, this examination of incremental proactive courage, though moral commitments, is an attempt to reorient ethics toward moral strength and away from heroic courage in three ways. First, I have shown how a conception of courage as incremental has advantages over a turning-point conception.

Second, I have contrasted moral (heraic) commitments with heroic acts of courage where commitments are constituent of moral strength and heroic acts are constituent of moral courage. To analyze this

contrast, I have examined incremental acts of proactive courage to illustrate that moral commitments are more central to morality than acts of reactive courage.

Thirdly, I have contrasted center-stage reactive courage against offstage proactive courage to show that turning-point heroism has been unfairly privileged over incremental proactive moral commitments. This contrast is useful because it shows how the image of heroic courage is an elite image that seems to reinforce a battle-hardened ruling class.

As a final summation of these contrasts, I have presented an argument against the privileging of reactive courage (following from the warrior courage) over proactive moral strength (civil nonviolence) that incorporates the contrast between moral commitments and acts of heroic courage.

I suggest that the traditional notion of courage as heroism has become inadequate because the notion of the heroic does not necessarily imply the fullest moral strength and commitment. I offer that a fully realized, and historically appropriate, sense of moral strength is found in ongoing moral commitments, not merely a momentary ability to carry out a reactive, heroic act. In other words, proactive moral commitments express moral strength more fully than reactive moral courage.

In addition to the strength to carry out a difficult or risky moral action, cases of moral courage tend to have a sense that moral agency is an individual, not a collective, trait. In this sense, heroic action is "up to me," and not "up to us." However, this sense of individual responsibility may merely be a moral impulse, not a fully realized character trait. To fully be a virtue, moral strength must not merely be an occasional impulse.

Therefore, the most thoroughly developed virtue of moral strength must be realized as an ongoing sense of moral commitment, with the strength to carry out appropriate action over a protracted period of time. Thus, one can only fully claim the virtue of moral strength if one has a fully developed moral commitment, a sense of ongoing responsibility, and the strength to carry out a lifelong series of actions that are consistent with one's moral commitment, and where one's vulnerability is not the central concern.

There is a legitimate worry that this formulation of pro-activity appears too isolated and individualistic. It certainly seems that courage is often tied to individual *virtue* and individual *agency*. In contrast to this conception, moral strength and nonviolence, *as more communitarian virtues*, would also include the ability and commitment to carry out ethical activity collectively, as well as conduct open-minded, though principled, dialogue with differing others, concerning the ethics of controversial activities. Furthermore, a more communitarian virtue must affirm that moral strength is not simply an individual strength, but we are strong to the degree that we live amongst a supportive, activist community. *Together*, we can find

strength and create nonviolent change; *in isolation*, we are generally much weaker. However, individual courage and nonviolence does exist and is worthy for its sense of individual compassion and service.

To conclude, the work of this paper has been directed toward answering the question, "Are pacifists cowards?" If pacifism embodies lifelong, nonviolent, moral commitments, then it appears that pacifism is the embodiment of proactive moral strength. On this analysis, heroic reactive courage is not the full embodiment of moral strength because it does not necessitate lifelong moral commitments. So, the answer to this question is that pacifists are not necessarily turning-point heroes, but they do embody the fullest sense of moral commitment and strength through a lifelong discipline of incremental steps toward a more ethical world. In other words, pacifists may not necessarily be courageous heroes, at least not in the classical sense, but they are not cowards, taking the easy way out, when their lives are committed to moral projects that seek to uplift our world. Pacifists choose the heraic, though they are not immune to the heroic.

Questions:

*1. What is **minimal violence pacifism**?*

The idea of minimal violence pacifism is the personal and organizational commitment to restrict participants to self-defense, or the defense of the defenseless. In order not to lose the narrative of a peaceful activity, participants must be carefully disciplined to ensure that their self-defense is clearly justified to the media or a neutral observer.

*2. How do nonviolent movements lose their power when they **turn violent** and thereby **lose control of their narrative**?*

When nonviolent movements confront abusive and oppressive power, they need to remember that those in power can control the narrative of the confrontation. When Bull Connor refused to unleash his police dogs and club wielding officers onto demonstrators in Montgomery, Alabama, he regained the narrative lost when the media filmed this abuse at an earlier demonstration. His nonviolent response to the demonstrators made his authority seem respectable again, costing Martin Luther King a narrative advantage won previously. When the Black Panthers brandished weapons against abusive police force, but did not use them, they gained narrative advantage in their restraint, and police authority was chastened. When the Black Panthers used violence, the police appeared justified in countering that violence—and even in cases where the police fired first, and Black Panthers fired in self-defense, the police controlled the narrative by asserting that the Panthers fired first. The **key strategic asset of any movement for social justice is to never lose control of your narrative**!

Further Questions:

*1. What is the distinction between **self-defense and nonviolent action/resistance**?*

*2. In what cases does **self-defense** allow nonviolent movements **maintain control of their narrative**?*

*3. When does **fighting to protect what one cares about wrong**?*

*4. What is **worth protecting violently**?*

- *Oneself*
- *close others*
- *distant others*
- *country*
- *identity*
- *principle*

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Chapter Ten: Navigating Goodness and Evil; Professional Ethics

Part One: Goodness and Evil

Readings:

Hallie, P. (1981). From cruelty to goodness. *Hastings Center Report*, 23-28.

Birmingham, P. (2003). Holes of oblivion: The banality of radical evil. *Hypatia, 18*(1), 80-103.

Key Dilemma of Part One:

Mainstream USA culture presupposes that conflicts generally start from the different and threatening **self-interests** of the disputants. The basic mediation process assumes that a resolution to a conflict will be found when disputants combine their self-interests, so that a win-win solution can be created.

A case can be made that this assumption is not true for everyone because disputants often internalize the interests of larger groups–political, cultural, social, familial, identity and business. Sometimes, disputants sacrifice their self-interest for the interests of larger groups. Most of us probably cycle through all of these moral commitments, depending on the situation, and depending on our moods. The following chart demonstrates the diversity of moral commitments that disputants can bring to the table.

Moral Realm	*Self-Interest*	*Immediate Circle Interest*	*Distant Others Interest*
Needy Self/Selfish	yes	no	no
Extending Morality to Immediate Circle	yes	yes	no
Negligent of Immediate Circle	yes	no	yes
Universal Balance	yes	yes	yes
Sacrificing All for Immediate Circle	no	yes	no
Sacrificing Self for All	no	yes	yes
Sacrificing Self and Circle for Far	no	no	yes
Universally Negligent	no	no	no

In the chart, above, the following terms are defined as follows:

Moral Realm: The area or areas that one considers as part of one's moral commitment.

Self-Interest: Where one's morality primarily revolves around what is good for oneself.

Immediate Circle Interest: Where one's morality primarily revolves around what is good for one's family, home, friends, clients, interest groups.

Distant Others: This category includes diverse people, species, and nature beyond one's immediate circle.

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

The following example focuses on a divorce that involves young children: Let's say that both parents want primary custody because that goal fits their self-interest. At first glance, this looks like a win-lose conflict that fits the top rung of the chart above, "Needy Self/Selfish." However, the mediator may ask the disputants about how much they value the interests of the children. Hopefully, their morality supports honoring the interests of the children (Extending Morality to Immediate Circle." From this, a shared custody plan can be created where time with each parent is designed to maximize the interests of the children.

The default setting for thinking about the practice of mediation is to suppose the people have self-interests and that these can be combined to produce a resolution to their conflicts. If asked about self-interest, people can produce them, even when self-interest is not the primary way that they lead their lives. Mediators have success creating resolutions with the combining-self-interest strategy, so why think about changing it?

On the other side of the difference/dilemma, is the view that mediation need not be confined to the combining-self-interest strategy. I suggest that mediators ask disputants about the moral reasoning that drives their side of the conflict. When disputant moral principles are on the table, then there may be a way to combine these principles to reach a resolution to the conflict at hand.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of particular individuals, that are familiar to you, who tend to fit these categories?

2. Can you explain why they are the way that they are?

3. How can one have a balanced moral life, while having boundaries against moral burn-out?

4. How does competitiveness affect our moral commitments?

5. Is there both a healthy and unhealthy level of competitiveness in the moral life?

6. Does the need for losers fuel selfish competitiveness?

7. How is dishonesty and gaslighting create toxic moral environments, and undermine conflict processes, collaboration, and community?

8. How is secrecy and the lack of transparency create toxic moral environments, and undermine conflict processes, collaboration, and community?

9. What other forms of manipulation to people use that can undermine conflict processes, collaboration, and community?

10. How is healing basic to goodness?

11. How is goodness a kind of welcoming?

12. What is the banality of evil?

13. What is the relationship between evil and hate?

14. What is the relationship between hate and hate crimes?

15. How is affirmative action both necessary and perceived as unfair?

Part Two: Professional Ethics: Universal or Plural?

Readings:

Oregon Mediation Association Core Standards of Mediation Practice

"10 Rules for the Ethics of Means and Ends, from Saul D. Alinsky"

Key Dilemma of Part Two:

Are universal professional ethics necessary to protect the interests of clients, when they can be culturally biased?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

Maintaining privacy is a key element of many professional codes of ethics, when the release of information may be embarrassing or damaging to clients or patients. Confidentiality protects people when they are vulnerable. However, in some cultures, closed door meetings are suspect. In these cultural settings, conflict resolution is more public. Sometimes, family members feel that conflict resolution processes should not be hidden from them. In these cases, confidentiality is a cultural threat. Even in mainstream American culture, it is quite helpful to recount cases, anonymously, in great detail within educational processes, or in discussions amongst professional colleagues, where the identity of the disputants might be guessed. The dilemma to be engaged here is that privacy is important to conflict resolution, and it is also problematic.

By confronting ethical dilemmas, a conflict facilitator code of ethics is transformed, as follows:

As I suggested earlier, we, as conflict facilitators, need to move within the tension of abstraction and particularity—the transpersonal and the personal. We need to generalize and theorize to describe what

all humans (or most humans) share, but then those generalizations and theories are constantly challenged by examples of individual and cultural difference, belief, and norms. In this dialectic process, we are constantly, and endlessly, refining our view of human commonality and diversity.

In the following, I use this dialectical process to explore the need for a conflict resolution code of ethics. Codes of ethics necessarily involve abstractions that generalize across individual and cultural difference. Practitioners can fear that they either follow the code or are in violation of the code. Since conflict resolution is highly sensitive to the problem of generalizing across individual and cultural difference, it seems that a code of ethics may undermine this sensitivity.

Before we come to any conclusions based on the abstract analysis above, let's look at some specific elements of ethics that are often mentioned in regard to conflict resolution practice: confidentiality, neutrality, impartiality, informed consent, and avoiding conflicts of interest.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is a value that can be culturally biased. So, confidentiality is problematic as an absolute ethical standard. Like other elements of codes of ethics, context matters. The fundamental value that must be engaged is to minimize the potential harm to the client, the client's family, and cultural circle.

Self-Determination:

Self-determination is another mainstream Euro-American notion, derived from the concept of self-interest. The presumption is that if we allow others to help us determine our position in a conflict, then we are not living up to our responsibility of fully making our own decisions. That responsibility is, in turn, derived from the individualist idea that each person is radically alone, and not connected to others. Many peoples outside of this tradition believe that each person is radically connected to others, and therefore, must balance their self-interest with the interest of others, with whom they identify–hopefully including opposing disputants.

Informed Consent:

Shouldn't disputants know what kind of conflict resolution process to which they are consenting? One concern is that it is always difficult to know if disputants' consent really mean that they know to what they are consenting. Furthermore, in processes that are traditional and public, informed consent would be odd indeed? How would you ask people in those cultures whether they understand their own cultural traditions?

Fees Effect on Impartiality:

Mediators customarily charge fees for their services, unless they are willing to work as volunteers. However, fees are problematic when they are paid by one of the disputants, and not the other. Fees are problematic because the mediator may be, or may appear to be, working for the interests of one disputant, and not the other. Though the mediator may be able perform their duties as a neutral in completely unbiased ways, the disputant who is not paying for the mediator may reasonably suspect that the mediator is biased towards the interests of the disputant who is paying for the mediation. I was a disputant in a mediation, where the mediator was paid by an entity that favored an opposing disputant. I pointed this out during the mediation, and the process unraveled from there—a failed process. One way to potentially address this problem is to create a neutral fund for mediation, where the disputants are not disempowered by who manages the fund.

Neutrality and Impartiality:

Again, these notions are key to conflict resolution codes of ethics in mainstream Western culture. Neutrality and impartiality mean that the conflict facilitator is not going to take sides with one disputant against the other. The problem is that disputants may perceive favoritism in the conflict facilitator, even when it is not consciously intended.

Another way to conceive of this concern is for the conflict facilitator to advocate a conflict process that is designed to be neutral. However, specific conflict processes may not be perceived as neutral by the disputants. For example, in many cultures, disputants want the advice and direction from the conflict resolver. Advice and direction are hardly considered to be part of a neutral or impartial process in mainstream American culture.

Since every conflict facilitator has a particular social position, social conditioning gives the facilitator an implicit bias. Additionally, disputants might have an implicit bias toward the conflict facilitator. Both directions of bias undermine any supposed neutrality or impartiality. Therefore, the conflict facilitator must repeatedly examine the dynamics of the ongoing collaboration to make sure that the negotiating table remains level. This means that the conflict facilitator must regularly check in with disputants to get their perspectives on the balance of power and authority. Keeping track of body language to monitor any anxiety is also important.

The goal is to create a process that feels fair and considerate of the disputants need to constructively address a conflict or dispute. How conflict facilitators address this goal will depend on how well they manage all of the intangibles of a conflict. In this regard, expertise depends on being mindful of all the ways that a conflict process can get off track. Experience, combined with regular consultation with conflict professionals, will build expertise over time.

Conflicts of Interest:

A conflict of interest occurs when a conflict facilitator has multiple interests (financial, status, or personal, etc.), and when an outside interest has the potential to undermine the conflict facilitator's central responsibility to disputants and clients.

An example of a conflict of interest is the fact that the Oregon judges who rule on proposed changes to public service benefits are also designated recipients of those benefits after they retire. How can those judges fairly rule on the constitutionality of the proposed benefit changes, if the judges might potentially lose benefits with certain decisions? Would these judges rule against their self-interest? If we believe that their decisions are squarely based on constitutional law and a clear conception of the public good, then they would demonstrate that the conflict of interest was not detrimental to fair decision-making. Do we believe that? If we believe that people basically make decisions and take positions in conflicts on the base of self-interest, then we should be suspicious of these judges' conflicts of interest. We could demand that such judges have a different retirement package that would avoid the appearance of potential impropriety. The Oregonian wrote an editorial examining this problem.

A common potential conflict of interest for conflict facilitators is when they are hired by management to help address a conflict where the management has an interest in how the employee conflict turns out. Disputants seem justified in being suspicious that conflict facilitators have the appearance of potential impropriety when they are being paid by management. To prevent this conflict of interest, management must convince the conflict facilitator and the disputants that management has no interest in the outcome of the conflict process. This convincing may be difficult if management has a history of duplicity. A further step that a conflict facilitator may need to take is to interview disputants, separately, to determine their trust level toward management's claim of neutrality.

Purpose of Codes of Ethics:

At this point in our discussion, we might revisit the purposes of codes of ethics. If they are meant to standardize practice, then they are liable to run afoul of the cultural disjunctions mentioned above. However, there is another concern that practitioners have within many cultures. That concern is the legal problem of protecting the vulnerability of individuals against malpractice. In individualistic cultures based on scarcity-driven economic principles—such as the United States of America—individuals are quite vulnerable to predatory practices throughout the economy. In communitarian societies, where people have an engrained commitment to the public good, and a deeper knowledge of each other's character, this vulnerability is arguably much lower.

However, whenever money is charged for a service, there is a potential for fraud or incompetence. To protect disputants from being harmed in this way, codes of ethics, along with credentialing, have been the key to enforcement of certain standards of practice.

Now, with the above justification for uniform standards of practice to protect the vulnerable, these same standards generate conflicts with minority cultures and individual difference. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, this is a central dilemma in the enforcement of professional codes of ethics for any human serves. So, how can we resolve this dilemma?

An Alternate View of Codes of Ethics:

One possible alternative is to assert a code of ethics that stresses the relational virtues of good will, compassion, empathy, humility, generosity, forgiveness, and gratitude. However, who is to be the judge of whether these virtues have been a part of the conflict resolution process, or not? Relational virtues are experienced quite personally, and do not generate much irrefutable evidence. Furthermore, a conflict resolver could have relational virtues, and still be incompetent. On the other side of the equation, a conflict resolver could have few or no relational virtues, and still be competent at conflict resolution.

Evidence of Violations of Professional Codes of Ethics:

Individual virtues, like confidentiality, neutrality, conflicts of interest, and informed consent can generate evidence. In other words, the lack of confidentiality, neutrality and informed consent can be shown with evidence. In Western mainstream culture, evidence is needed to monitor competence and protect the vulnerable, so it seems like we are stuck with the individual behaviors that generate evidence as the basis for a conflict resolution code of ethics—unless we could have codes of ethics that are in synch with different cultures. Then we are left with the problem of addressing the peculiarities of individual differences, as well as unusual circumstances that seem to require breaking the standard codes of ethics. This view suggests that professional codes of ethics need to evolve with multicultural input and restorative justice processes that protect clients, as well as protect the cultural integrity of practitioners and the culturally appropriate conflict processes that they facilitate.

Discussion Questions:

1. How are we going to have legitimate exceptions to the code that are not rationalizations for incompetence and predation?

2. What is the distinction between moral strength and moral weakness?

3. What is moral agency?

4. How does groupthink affect professional ethics?

5. How does relativism affect professional ethics?

6. How does determinism affect professional ethics?

7. How does faith and fate affect professional ethics?

8. What is the distinction between financial strength and moral strength?

9. How does navigating difference transform professional ethics?

10. How can we deepen our conscience through diverse dialogues?

Chapter Eleven: Navigating Global Ethics Theories

Part One: Overcoming Global Evils

Readings:

Excerpt from *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*

Costello, S. (2015). Female genital mutilation/cutting: risk management and strategies for social workers and health care professionals. *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy*, *8*, 225.

Key Dilemma of Part One:

Can dominating cultures overcome their cultural biases in creating a global ethics that undermine the power and autonomy of dominated traditional cultures? In the face of colonizing/settler ethics, how are we to consider practices that imperialistic cultures label as evil? The following are three indigenous cultural practices that have been call evil by Euro-American cultures.

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Examples to help us work through this dilemma:

Example 1: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

In the cultural practice (outlined in Costello, Susan, "Female genital mutilation/cutting: risk management and strategies for social workers and health care professionals," 2015), female genital cutting is reportedly banned by most, if not all, of the governments where it is practiced. Yet it persists in outlying cultural and tribal areas, where it is understood as part of traditional/indigenous rites of passage. According to UNICEF research (2016), approximately 200 million women have had this procedure done to them in 30 countries (27 African countries, Indonesia, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Yemen).

A global human rights principle holds that people should be free of any medically unnecessary suffering. This principle has led to laws against rites of passage that generate non-medical suffering.

The dilemma is how can traditional and indigenous rites of passage, that grant cultural identity, retain sufficient rigor, authenticity, and power, without lasting damage and suffering to the initiates?

The people who continue to practice it have had to resist the ethics of the nearby cosmopolitan cities in order to preserve their indigenous identity, which is constantly under threat of exclusion and extinction. The Native American sun-dance and potlatch are also practices that have been banned for similar reasons.

Example 2: Sun Dance

"In 1896 an unidentified Oglala Lakota holy man told James R. Walker that 'the Sun Dance is the greatest ceremony that the Oglalas do." This ceremony required the piercing of initiate chests and lifted off the ground with ropes to dangle in the sun. The Sun Dance was declared illegal by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1883 and banned by the Department of the Interior in 1904. The ban was repealed by the Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. However, these US government decisions did not have "much impact on the ceremony's actual practice. It flourished in secret performances" until it was openly led by Frank Fools Crow in 1952. (Rice, 1989-1990) Like Female genital mutilation/cutting, this ceremony risked permanent harm to those pierced.

Example 3: Potlatch

"A potlatch is a gift-giving feast practiced by Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada and the United States,[1] among whom it is traditionally the primary economic system.[2] Potlatches are also a common feature of the peoples of the Interior and of the Subarctic adjoining the Northwest Coast, though mostly without the elaborate ritual and gift-giving economy of the coastal peoples." (Wikipedia) This gift-giving redistributed wealth from the tribal leaders to the whole population.

Potlatches went through a history of rigorous ban by the Canadian and American federal governments, continuing underground despite the risk of criminal punishment, and have been studied by many anthropologists. Since the practice was de-criminalized in the post-war years, the potlatch has re-emerged in

some communities." Potlatches were criminalized by Euro-American authorities because it threatened the privatization of wealth that colonists and settlers imported into tribal areas. (Wikipedia)

Introduction to Part One:

First, we need to **examine global evils** that suggest the **necessity of an overarching global ethics**. Many current approaches to global ethics do not seem to be fully aware of these global evils, some of which are imbedded in the structures and assumptions of the global ethics systems that are recommended.

Second, we need to examine **dominant cultural biases** in the construction of contemporary notions of global ethics. I suggest that there is a bias when philosophers in the Western tradition try to extend their views globally without collaborating with non-Western and indigenous philosophers, from other traditions, to generate a more inclusive and pluralistic view of this field.

Third, as mentioned in the Introduction for this book, I respond to **three concerns from the textbook, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*** (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall). These concerns can be stated as evils to avoid and dilemmas to navigate, as any strict adherence to one side of these dilemmas—over the other—will be counterproductive, while developing collaborative strategies between the sides to these dilemmas, is likely to be the more successful strategy.

Preliminary Questions:

1. Dominate-culture's idea of a global ethics has the power to influence dominated-culture's ethics all over the world, without much consideration for the ethical insights of dominated peoples. How can a meaningful dialogue occur between dominate-cultural ethics and dominated cultural ethics? How do those with dominant-culture ethical beliefs and practices overcome their bias against dominated-culture ethical beliefs and practices when they often misunderstand the ethical identities of dominant-culture people?

2. How can a global ethics emerge from dialogues and investigations of diverse traditional practices, when dominant cultures tend to lionize their own practices, and believe that dominated cultures need to conform to dominating cultural ethics?

3. How do dominant-culture people identify openings for these dialogues and investigations, while overcoming the fears of dominated people that such dialogues and investigations are part of the historical colonial and subjugation project?

4. In pursuing laudable global ethics, how do we choose between soft power and hard power? (Ramsbotham, et al).

5. In conflict processes, how do we reconcile interests that cannot be reconciled because the powerful have no interest in sharing power with the marginalized powerless? (Ramsbotham, et al).

6. How do we overcome the fact that western assumptions are imbedded in conflict processes, and therefore, are not applicable to many non-western cultures. (Ramsbotham, et al?

Central Questions:

1. Is there a dominant cultural bias in global ethics?

Dominant countries and cultures, in their practices and propaganda, tend to deny or underestimate the amount current global ethical problems that their cultures create or aggravate. These practices and propaganda create an almost insurmountable bias in the dominant cultural view of global ethics.

Global ethics problems are created or aggravated by dominate countries and cultures.

Global industrial and consumer activity has reached a point that is not environmentally sustainable, and is leading to runaway greenhouse gases and catastrophic climate change.

An extreme power and wealth imbalance between and inside of dominant and dominated countries is inhuman and unsustainable.

Global capitalism has created a global addiction to money, status, and power, deepening the oppression, marginalization, and demonization of those without money, status and power.

Dominant, industrialized cultures have developed impersonal, disconnected, and low-context modes of thought that clash with personal, connected, high context, more indigenous cultures, and create an ethical disconnect between these divergent cultural types.

Even though “developed” countries provide foreign aid and humanitarian relief, the overarching effect of dominant, industrialized politics and economic activities is to create global instability and insecurity**,** both within dominant-countries and throughout the world. This instability and insecurity undermine global stability and equality. Furthermore, collective agreements and actions amongst dominated countries and peoples are undermined.

2. How can these dominant-country, cultural biases be addressed and overcome?

Overcoming environmental unsustainability: Is carbon neutrality enough? Carbon neutrality is central to averting runaway greenhouse gases; however, there are many other ways that the industrial revolution has created unsustainable practices. Each of these practices must be investigated with the goal of finding sustainable practices as replacements.

Overcoming extreme power and wealth imbalance: Are thriving middle classes enough? A thriving middle class has been shown to create an economy that is much more stable and sustainable than an economy with a vast division between haves and have-nots; however, economically marginalized populations indicate that a society does not work for everyone.

Overcoming global addiction to money, status, and power: Is community-building enough? Community-building, in the context of stable, secure cultures, is central to creating a shift from the monomaniacal focus on gaining money, status, and power towards a culture where helping others, sharing resources, and a spirit of generosity is central. However, a society that is unstable, insecure, and fragmented, in the midst of homelessness, crime, and exploitation, generates the need for escape and convincing ourselves that we are better than others.

Overcoming the domination of impersonal, disconnected, and low-context modes of thought: Is it possible to create modes of thought that integrate personal, connected, and high context experience and cognitions? I hope that this is possible! People who have experienced living in with both modes of thought will, doubtless, show the rest of us how these two modes of thought can be integrated for the purpose of ethical growth.

Unraveling the paradox of global instability and insecurity, in the midst of foreign aid and humanitarian relief: Sadly, foreign aid and humanitarian relief cloaks the larger practices of global instability and insecurity. Unraveling this paradox is not easy, as foreign aid and humanitarian relief is often crucially important and desperately needed. However, the global capitalist system, built on the foundation of colonialism, often creates the need for foreign aid and humanitarian relief.

3. In pursuing laudable global ethics, how do we choose between soft power and hard power? (Ramsbotham, et al)

Nonviolent soft power, where the means and ends are both ethical, certainly seems best because **violent hard power** uses unethical means to justify ethical ends, while creating new structures of power-over, rather than more collaborative structures. However, the dilemma arises when nonviolent soft power may be "ineffective and dangerous in a world where antagonistic, irreconcilable individuals and groups, are committed to **violence and dishonesty to achieve their goal**." (my emphasis) (Ramsbotham, et al). These individuals or groups use violence to **preserve oppressive, unethical, practices**.

On the other hand, using violent hard power, to win laudable ethical goals, may be successful in overthrowing oppressors and generating justice, benefits, and empowerment to marginalized masses, violent campaigns run the **risk of creating new power-over structures, which may be oppressive in new ways, as new enemies will likely be created that want to return to power**. This dynamic, in turn, undermines the long-term implementation of an improved ethical climate, and encourages violent resistance to the newly forced ethics.

In a world that often functions through both direct and structural violence, it can be argued that positive change requires the ability to violently overthrow both oppressive people and institutions to establish democracy and benevolent institutions. However**, nonviolent change has often been documented to be more often successful in accomplishing these ends, without resorting to violence**. Still, in some situations, violence has also been successful, so the dilemma remains as to which tactic to employ. The prime consideration is for liberation forces to create and **maintain a narrative that is perceived as positive for justice, ethical progress, and maximal inclusion, with minimal hierarchy and force.**

Navigating this dilemma seems to require that change agents exhaust their nonviolent strategies first, before resorting to any violence, while keeping the strategies of minimal violence, as a possibility. Hopefully, this minimal violence is limited to self-defense and/or the destruction of property, not people, that represents an **obstacle to global justice**.

Some regime-change movements have strategically employed both tactics. So, a way to navigate this dilemma, in these circumstances, may be to maximally employ nonviolence, and minimally employ violence, in cases only where there is a necessity to defend areas occupied by liberation forces. In the past, it has often seemed necessary for liberation forces to physically occupy the structures of power, it is now conceivable to create a **shadow governance structure**, electronically, that could gain strength and scope, as the existing governance structure weakens due an absence of popular support.

***4. In conflict processes, how do we reconcile interests that cannot be reconciled because the powerful have no interest in sharing power with the marginalized powerless*?** (Ramsbotham, et al).

This statement implies that people generally advocate for their self- and class-interests, unilaterally, with no consideration for the interests of other individuals or classes. Whereas, social change advocates need to come from a wide variety of class, race, ethnicity, and other identifications and orientations, throughout the power spectrum. Positive social change that addresses widespread inequality, oppression, abuse, and other kinds of suffering, is most successful when victims of oppression do not deny the authentic compassion, permeating all classes and backgrounds, when they seek allies.

However, there will always be a certain number of hardcore-powerful people, who doggedly and single-mindedly pursue their self- and class-interests, even in the face of obvious mass suffering. Syria under

Assad comes to mind. They rationalize that their power is earned and deserved, while those who suffer under a culture's structure have brought that suffering upon themselves, due to laziness, poor life planning, lack of exercising their prerogatives, ignoring opportunities, and playing the victim-card to gain sympathy and charity.

To navigate this dilemma, I suggest that we abandon the view that most people limit their advocacy to simple self- or class-interest. It is not that difficult for the average person to identify with someone who suffers. Martin Luther King knew that videos of police dogs, swinging batons, and firehoses, unleashed onto African American children, women, and men, would turn the hearts of masses of white Americans, and he was correct because our hearts and minds change when we graphically experience injustice and suffering. Ironically, assuming that people unequivocally stick to their self- and class-interests may contribute to them doing so because powerful people may feel attacked, when they feel stereotyped in this way. Again, navigating this dilemma requires that activists not be too trusting nor too cynical of members of dominant groups.

5. How do we overcome the fact that western assumptions are imbedded in conflict processes, and therefore, are not applicable to many non-western cultures*?* (Ramsbotham, et al)?

Nonviolent and collaborative processes are both ancient and are found in most cultures worldwide. Indeed, specific collaborative and nonviolent methods can have important cultural values and processes imbedded in them. Therefore, a way to navigate this dilemma is for those interested in enhancing their collaborative and nonviolent capacities may, first, want to fully embrace their own culture's traditional conflict process principles and practices, then second, import and translate collaborative and nonviolent processes from other cultures that may be useful to them.

Navigating this dilemma requires local people to translate their culture's conflict processes practices to outsiders, while translating foreign culture conflict processes practices to insiders. The result will be a synthesis of practices that optimize the productivity of more inclusive and culturally-appropriate collaboration and nonviolence.

Part Two: Motivating and Enforcing Global Ethics

Reading:

Melé, D., & Sánchez-Runde, C. (2013). "Cultural diversity and universal ethics in a global world". Journal of Business Ethics, September 2013, Issue 4, pp 681-686

Key Dilemma of Part Two:

If we can create a truly just universal global ethics, how can we motivate and inforce it; or must we give up the project or a universal global ethics?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

Global climate change, caused by industrialization, is upon us, and the sources of greenhouse gases and other pollutants are fairly easy to identify. Global treaties that commit countries to reduce their production of climate change chemicals are inspiring, but only weakly enforced. At some point, stronger measures will need to be taken to stop the production of these chemicals. What if some countries and corporations resist efforts to enforce such reductions? Will we need to use violence to force these countries and corporations to change their practices? And will such violence itself contribute to the risk of runaway greenhouse gases.

- The challenge of a climate change global ethic is that there are belief systems that resist measures to reduce greenhouse gas production:
- There are some, perhaps many, religious people that believe that climate change is God's test in our faith in Him to deliver us from peril, as humans are made in the image of God, so He will be our eternal protector.
- There are some, perhaps many, technology-loving people who believe that a technological solution will be found to solve the problem of climate change without have to roll back current

industrial practices.

- There are some, perhaps many, skeptical people who believe that the threat of disastrous climate change is an exaggeration (fake news). They believe that there have been many climate fluctuations in the past, and we are merely going through such a fluctuation now.
- There are some, perhaps many, wealthy/powerful people, whose wealth/power depends on continued production of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, so they will do anything within their power to resist restrictions on these chemicals.
- How can the challenges of these four categories of people be met nonviolently, or will violence be necessary?

Introduction to Part Two:

We need to construct a vision of **global ethics from a nonviolent collaborative-process perspective**. Traditionally, ethics is framed as a set of principles, imperatives, or rules to be followed. Therefore, this version of global ethics is essentially theoretical and philosophical, but the implementation is left to forces of persuasion, governmental forces, or military forces. Implementation through nonviolent collaborative-processes is not usually the focus of global ethics.

What is particularly powerful about collaborative processes, used in global ethical conflicts, is their **ability to create a space to navigate between values in an effort to generate overarching moral progress**. This is sometimes easier within cultures with more ethical latitude than cultures with more rigid ethical beliefs and practices; however, it depends on the way a culture's specific ethics and practices embrace the specific beliefs and practices of other cultures. I will suggest some **collaborative processes that may be useful for investigation, dialogue, and the construction of space for moral progress**.

Finally, I suggest that **global multiculturalism** is the foundation for the effective creation of **an inclusive global ethics**.

Questions:

1. What does global ethics look like from a nonviolent, collaborative perspective?

I suggest that the central concern that must be addressed by a **system of global ethics** is how to address the industrialized, capitalist world order, where countries, corporations, cultures, and individuals are

apparently **addicted to power, wealth, and status**. Even though there are millions of people on earth, who are satisfied to **work hard in harmony with nature and generosity to others**; there are other people that want to **maximize their power, wealth, and status, even at the expense of other people and the environment**. Cultures vary on how they encourage people to value one mode of existence over the other.

2. How is multiculturalism necessary for the creation of an inclusive global ethics?

Multiculturalism is based on the idea that all cultures have the right to interact respectfully with each other. No culture should be demonized; rather all cultures should participate in ongoing dialogues and collaborations in the creation and maintenance of a sustainable and truly inclusive global ethics

3. Force may be needed in policing global crimes and evils, but can we democratically create and maintain global ethics without authoritarian force?

In order to prevent the necessity of using force to police global crimes and evils, we need to at least start to institute the following crime and evil prevention reforms as soon as possible:

- Ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.
- By progressive levels of lethality, dismantle other weapons of mass destruction.
- Ban military weapons for civilian purchase.
- Phase in global military disarmament, until there are no militaries anywhere. (Costa Rica abolished their standing army in 1948—the year Gandhi was assassinated and the year that I was born)
- Commit wealthy countries to a plan to uplifting low-income countries, so that all countries are at comparable levels of wealth as there will be no peace unless everyone experiences fairness and justice.
- Commit wealthy communities to adopt impoverished communities.
- The upper-percenters need to adopt an impoverished local and global families of the lower-percenters.
- Reduce wealth gaps within all countries.
- House the homeless everywhere.
- Provide medicine on a sliding scale everywhere.
- Eliminate prisons and provide economic counseling, training, and jobs to former inmates.

- House the criminally insane in therapeutic hospitals.
- Create a Conflict Transformation Corps that provides culturally-appropriate training in conflict processes for all of the people of the world.
- Create a Diversity Corps to train all people to respect differences of culture, religion, gender, sexuality, politics, and disability.
- Commit all countries to sustainable ecological practices, coupled with global education on the climate crisis.

4. Can all of these reforms be done nonviolently, without violence?

Of course, this is an impossible question to answer. It can only be said that for the survival of life on earth, it will be necessary to start today. If we do not start soon, we will necessitate that these measures will require violence, which can be shown to be, all too commonly, self-defeating.

Chapter Twelve: Navigating Abuse Of Power/ Manipulative Games

Part One: Sharing Power and Abusing Power

Reading:

Penta, L. J. (1996). Hannah Arendt: On Power. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, 10*(3), 210–229.

Key Dilemma of Part One:

How do we reconcile the forces of "power-over" with the forces of "power-with," when people in advanced capitalist countries are predominately motivated to advance their "power-over," their wealth, status, and power? Are power, wealth, and status morally neutral, neither good nor evil– only becoming good or evil by how they are used?

Alternatively, are power, wealth, and status intrinsically evil because they are the basis of inequality?

Important Qualification: There is a continuum of positions between the two polarities, listed above. Therefore, the dilemma between the two polarities is not "either, or," but rather where do we find a morally defensible position, given the context of our specific lives?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

When President Trump announced his tax cuts (2019), which maximally benefitted the rich, nonprofits charitable organizations immediately knew that those tax cuts would not come their way because tax-deductible contributions were also lowered. This meant that the majority of rich people took their tax breaks and invested them in themselves, rather than charitable organizations because they would not gain any tax advantages. In theory, if all tax deductions for nonprofit organizations were eliminated, the vast number of nonprofits would cease to exist.

My Suggestions about Navigating this Dilemma:

Personally, I lean toward the view that power, wealth, and status are intrinsically evil because I believe that the vast inequality and brutality within the human race (and towards our environment) can be at least partly attributable to these attitudes and behaviors. Simply, extreme differences of power, wealth, and status undermine morality itself—a kind of "white hole," just as the proliferation of white lies or small deceptions eventually transform trusting relationships into trustless, crazymaking, gaslighting.

On the other hand, I can understand the cultural pressure, and the number of examples that point toward the supposed neutrality of power, wealth, and status. Chief amongst these examples are where those with more power, wealth, and status have been morally committed and accomplished. For me, the problem of power, wealth, and status is generated by the isolation of those with more from those with less. For example, there is no homeless problem in wealthy communities because they are systematically excluded by the police.

Our thinking about the role of power, wealth, and status in our daily lives and in the broader culture will necessitate a recounting of a diverse set of people, experiences, and circumstances, without overly relying on abstract theories of morality and human behavior.

We need to consider opening a conversation with: "I'm genuinely interested in your viewpoint on the role of power, wealth, and status in our wider culture; what do you think about it?" When we begin our conversation about this dilemma by asking what the other person thinks about the issue. We might ask, "Would you like to spend some time thinking together about the role of power, wealth, and status in our world?" We might begin our conversation about the experiences that inform their position on the issue of power, wealth, and status may explain the degree of investment that they have in their position. Powerful experiences lead to strong opinions!

From an existential viewpoint, people's experiences with the powerful, wealthy, and those with a lot of status determine their views on this dilemma. Generally, when we were children, our parents or guardians had significantly more power, wealth, and status. They controlled our behaviors; they bought us stuff that we could not buy ourselves, and as parental figures, they occupied a higher status. Similarly, our teachers, our doctors and dentists, and the police also had more power and status than us. What were those experiences like?

If those experiences were generally positive, then we are likely to believe that power, wealth, and status is generally positive. If we had mixed experiences, we might find that power, wealth, and status is neutral and becomes positive or negative depending on how it is used. If our experiences were negative growing up, we might think that power, wealth, and status is generally negative. From this conclusion, we might do two opposing things. One, we might believe that they are bad—even evil—and dedicate our lives to minimizing them. Or two, we might decide to become powerful, wealthy, and occupy high status, so that we could lord it over others, as they have lorded it over us.

If we are curious about other people's experiences that are different from our own, we open up a space for navigating those differences.

In the case of our thinking about the proper role for power, wealth, and status in contemporary societies, our view from judgment suggests a certain position on the issue, and our view from compassion suggests a different position. Since I am critical of the how power, wealth, and status leads to social, economic, and environmental injustice, I need you use my view from compassion to see this issue through their values and experiences.

As we think about the examples of evil, and their relationship to power, wealth, and status, do we find that some unforgivable events happened to us, our family, and friends? Does this color how we think about this issue. On the other hand, we might find that we have forgiven these events too easily. Would movement toward more forgiveness or more unforgiveness change how we think of this dilemma about evil?

In the dilemma at hand, both extremes may have broader moral frameworks, as follows.

Leftist, Indigenous, utopian, and communitarian cultures are more likely to be critical of extremes of power, wealth and status, and point to overarching moral principles about equality, social and environmental justice, to support their views.

More conservative cultures will point out how power, wealth, and status drove civilization to become global, helping us overcome more primitive epochs. They will point to the traditional values of hard work, talent, and success are moral drivers for the advancement of civilization.

Is there a way to have equality, social and environmental justice, as well as the advancement of civilization concurrently? Answering this question could be the goal of conversations about the role of power, wealth, and status.

I suggest that we might consider ourselves to have a certain measure of identity fluidity or hybridization, while still having a strong sense of in-context morality. In other words, how can we find the morality within this specific issue, in this specific circumstance, with these specific people? This sense of the morality arising-in-the-moment stands in contract to forcing the moment to conform to a preconceived, narrow moral code or principle. Ultimately, the ethical aspiration that I suggest for conflict and collaboration facilitators requires moral discovery, rather than moral imposition.

The morality of power, wealth, and status may require us to think of a wide variety of circumstances, where they play quite different moral roles, and for us to accept that the morality of power, wealth, and status may be quite different is different circumstances.

Navigating the Space Created by the Dilemma:

When people consider this dilemma, they are often drawn to examples and experiences that support the following positions:

- Power, wealth, and status are intrinsically good.
- Power, wealth, and status are intrinsically neutral.
- Power, wealth, and status are intrinsically evil.

Hierarchical power, money, and status are simply different kinds of power. It has been argued that power is neutral, and therefore power is good if it is used for good purposes and evil if it is used for evil purposes

An example of using power for good is when as physicians use their power to perform surgery on unconscious people to save their lives; or when bystanders use their power to step in to stop a bully from harassing someone.

On the other hand, power is evil when it is used to disempower others, when those who are disempowered have done nothing to justify having power taken away from them. We take power away from the criminally insane to protect others because we have good reasons to believe that the criminally insane are a treat to the public. Creating public institutions and economic policies that disempower people, keep them unemployed and homeless, when they have done nothing to deserve such fates is evil.

Our society is structured so that a small percentage of people have massive power through their wealth, status, and structural power. With this power, they can use their wealth and status to greatly benefit others, which is certainly good. Unfortunately, only a minority of the powerful contribute to sustainable social and global structural improvements. Most of them use their wealth, power, and status to enrich themselves and their families in a never-ending competition to be the most powerful possible.

The bottom line is that capitalism is about the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a elite, who maintain an economy that serves their needs, not the larger public needs. Therefore, we can say that capitalism is evil because it uses power, wealth, and status for the interests of a few against the interests of the many.

Questions:

1. Do socialist bureaucracies transform capitalism into something better?

Since capitalism is driven by the self-interested incentive for more power, wealth, and status, how is a socialist bureaucracy any improvement? “It has become commonplace to observe that corporations behave like psychopaths.” (Rich, Nathaniel, NYT Magazine, April 9, 2019) We depend on large corporations because they are the engine of the economy, however, under socialism, they are more thoroughly regulated. Without stricter regulations, capitalist governments generally protect multinational corporations, so that they can flourish and expand their reach to exploit workers and resources, locally and globally. Socialist governments keep the immoral impulses of corporations in check, even taking over ownership of certain vital industries, so that ordinary people, vital resources, and less powerful countries, are not oppressed and exploited by this mammoth corporations. So, yes, it can be argued that socialism can, and does in many countries, transform capitalism into something better because they can put a leach on the psychopathic tendencies of corporations to pursue limitless power, wealth, and status.

2. Aren’t socialist bureaucracies as oppressive as large corporations?

Oppression occurs when any kind of bureaucracy, private or public, has a structure, where each person in the hierarchy is generally accountable upward towards those with more power, wealth, and status. Oppression will be overcome only when accountability becomes three directional: upward, downward, and laterally.

It seems obvious that individuals seek power, status, and wealth for their personal security and freedom. To a certain degree, individuals in Western, developed countries need to collaborate with family, friends, and colleagues to be successful in maintaining and achieving power, status, and wealth. However, family, social, and workmate bonds can weaken and disintegrate, potentially leaving the individual

alone to rebuild a network of families, friends, and colleagues. Though 90% of people in Western cultures marry by age 50, the divorce rate of between 40-50% in the U.S. Consequently, through the forces of social and geographical mobility, many individuals are recreating their romantic, social, and economic connections periodically, leaving individuals to recreate their strategies for success. (American Psychological Association https://www.apa.org/topics/divorce/ retrieved April 2, 2019)

Within this process of individuals seeking power, status, and wealth, some are helped by inheriting power, status, and wealth, while others are impoverished or disadvantaged who find their quest for power, status, and wealth obstructed by their lack of privilege, their lack of advantages. Given this dynamic, the wealth gap, status gap, and power gap get larger and larger, with more extremes of wealth at the top, and more casualties, homelessness, and crime at the bottom end.

Given our culture-wide belief that personal money, status, and power is the only way to have security and freedom, how will the powerful ever feel secure and free enough to contribute to the security and freedom of people at the bottom of the wealth gap? Given the reality of old age, infirmity, and death, when will the rich ever feel secure enough to help close the wealth gap? Given the luxuries available to the rich, how will they ever feel satiated enough to share with the masses of poor?

In *The Holy Bible*, 1 Timothy 6:10, it is written “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Is this still true today when capitalist societies are so thoroughly saturated with the necessity of more and more money? Isn’t it understandable that the wealthy and powerful love their power because it makes them secure, happy, and free? Are today’s wealthy “piercing themselves through with many sorrows?” Why would they want to let go of security, happiness, and freedom? In biblical times, people had security from family, workmates, and community, where wealth was not absolutely necessary for the needs of the day. Now, our daily lives thoroughly revolve around money.

True, there are some wealthy people who help the poor, but it is never enough to close the wealth gap and power gap. When President Trump announced a tax cut for 2019 that included a lower limit on tax-deductible, charitable giving, nonprofit organizations, that depend on charitable giving, immediately sounded an alarm because of their past experience that the wealthy will lower their giving if they cannot get tax deductions. Simply, for most wealthy people, charity benefits them at tax time, when it doesn’t they don’t give.

Where will the rising gap of power, status, and wealth lead us? At some point, entire economies collapse, as in the U.S. Great Depression, and the more recent Great Recession. The economic collapse that is happening currently in Venezuela has generated runaway inflation, reducing the value of money to nothing. Consequently, Venezuelans are in a deep humanitarian crisis. When the Argentinian economy

collapsed from 1998-2002, people ate out of each other's garbage cans. (Sharif Abdullah) Will such a crisis hit the U.S. when the wealth gap becomes intolerable?

Even though there are many examples of sharing power in the world, there still seems to be a strong tendency in capitalist and industrialized countries to generate hierarchies of wealth and power. Democracies depend on sharing power, and when this becomes more difficult, then they become failing democracies. "The Economist Intelligence Unit produces an annual review ranking countries on their adherence to 60 distinct democratic values, including electoral processes and press freedom. The US score of 7.98 out of 10 [in 2017], dropping into the flawed democracy category for the first time." (Independent, February 5, 2018, retrieved April 3, 2019 at https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/america-democratic-us-president-report-the-economist-a8195121.htnk?amp)

3. So, the dilemma is that democracies require shared power, but capitalist societies undermine democracies because of wealth, power, and status gaps. How can this dilemma be addressed?

Quote: Interview with **Nile Rodgers**, musician and cofounder of *The Chic* (famous for the song, "We Are Family"), in *Rolling Stone* magazine, October, 2018

4. *What are the best and worst parts of success?*

> "The worst part of success is the way it's changed the people in my life dealing with me. The relationships have deteriorated. I want to have the same kind of fun like we had when I was really poor, because that fun was organic and wonderful and based on us being friends. [Now], no one's ever paid me back. I've given out millions, A few months ago, I said to one of my cousins, whom I adore, "I just don't want this relationship anymore. That's the only time I ever hear from you." The best part is you've created something that people will remember. Well after I'm gone, "We Are Family: will be like "The Itsy Bitsy Spider."

Quote: Interview with **Jane Fonda**, actress and activist, in the *New York Times*, September 23, 2018:

5. What's the focus of your activism today?

> "Grassroots organizing. The organizations that are going door to door and helping people understand that the white working class is not the enemy of people of color, and vice versa. That we have to stand together against a common enemy, which is people who only care about money and power and don't give a hoot about average Americans."

Further Questions:

1. How should conflict workers understand power?

To start, power is usefully understood as pure force. Having power is the same as having money or status. Individuals or institutions that have power through money or status have the capacity to force their will on others. This is dramatically illustrated by the revelations of the #MeToo movement. There is no intrinsic morality in power, money, or status. Power is amoral. People who use their power to be generous and help others are acting morally. People who use their power to dominate and control others are acting immorally.

Hannah Arendt, a foundational feminist, claimed that individuals or institutions that have dominating power over others do not even have genuine power. She said that such power-over-others is really just oppression, and it is used to convince the public that the powerful deserve their power and the powerless deserve to be powerless. Arendt suggests that the only true power is collaborative power, where people share power with others. Oppressive power only becomes powerful when the powerless accept their oppression and do not organize with others to overthrow their oppressors. The #MeToo movement organized abused people to bring their oppressors to justice.

2. What is the distinction between power-over and power-with?

Mary Parker Follett, a foundational thinker in the field of conflict processes, explained that power-over (dominance and coercion) was the traditional relationship in the structures of civilization: one person's power over another person; one group's power over another group; one nation's power over another nation. Follett did not propose power-with as utopian, but rather that people often, naturally and creatively, collaborate with each other, and that tendency should be encouraged in every sector of society. In this way, the traditions and institutions of power-over could slowly wither away, being slowly replaced with the power-with, collaborative processes.

Since power-over–others is a defining feature of civilization, it is not surprising that people play power games to control others and gain their own self-interest by denying others what they want. Sports are built on this relationship. One can win at sports by outscoring an opponent, or by denying an opponent the ability to score as many points. Sometimes, those points are on a scoreboard, showing who scored the most—given the criteria of the sport, or on a clock, showing who accomplished some feat the fastest.

3. How is power related to money and status?

In some ways, power, money, and status are simply different modes of "power-over." Power can easily **oppress others**; money can make one **insensitive to the plight of impoverished others**; and status can make one **arrogant**. The paradoxical dilemma here is that for many people, power, money, and status are **simply survival tools**; not **physical survival, rather, identity survival**.

4. How is power related to identity survival?

To survive as "someone," rather than a "nobody," within one's identity group, one needs to have some level of status and power that other members of one's identity group respect and appreciate. This is true for all incomes, the wealthy and the impoverished. Even for homeless people, losing some level of status or power, means losing membership in one's identity group. The consequences of this loss of identity can lead to social isolation and mental illness.

5. How is power handled within collaborative processes?

To win power, or not lose power, people use many strategies. In collaborative processes, power plays should be absent, but elsewhere, outright or subtle power strategies are regularly in play. Navigating between our ubiquitous, civilized, tendency to maximize power, one cannot even trust collaborative processes, because even they can be undermined or used within a larger power plan.

In this chapter, I will explain the dynamics of common power plays, and suggest ways to address them, when one is in the midst of the riptide. For me, the key insight about the dynamics of power is that power plays are everywhere: in our homes, our jobs, our communities, in the media, and even in our schools and colleges. Even though people often cooperate with each other, and some of us participate in collaborative processes, involving stakeholders and disputants who are trying to find agreements and make shared decisions, power is still one of the largest elephants in the room.

Perhaps for long periods of time, the elephant appears to be calm, maybe even sleepy, but it can lurch into life and aggressively lean against the negotiating table, jolting it to an uneven surface—and the game changes radically. To keep the negotiating table even, and immune from manipulation, everyone in the room needs to be committed to keeping power evenly balanced, and be vigilant about any, even subtle, efforts to turn the proceedings into a game to be played and won.

However, conflict facilitators have the greatest burden of maintaining equal power in negotiations. Conflict facilitators need to watch for any indication that power inequities are being used to win an argument or conflict. Power differences come in many forms:

Objective power: where someone has a job title, some kind of status, official or renown

Subjective power: where someone has personal charm or attractiveness, an ability to tell a compelling story, or being hyper-logical.

To counter power in negotiations, appropriate boundaries need to be applied to the process so that no one dominates by filibustering, making others uncomfortable, subtle or overt threats, etc.

Another power strategy is to be overly adversarial, creating a win/lose dynamic to negotiations. On the

other hand, people might gain power by being overly accommodating, as a way of creating a trade-off dynamic, where an accommodator will expect a pay-back for being so “nice.”

- **Justifying power games because life is a game to win or lose, right?**
- There are many forms of this perception:
- Everybody tries to manipulate others to get their way, right?
- Somebody has to maintain control and order, right?
- Somebody has to be boss, right?
- Everybody plays on other people’s weaknesses, right?
- It’s easier to complain than to praise, right?

Part Two: Manipulative Games People Play

Reading:

Beltran, S. (2005). "The international protection of human rights versus groups employing psychological manipulation". *International Journal of Human Rights*, *9*(3), 285-305.

Key Dilemma of Part Two:

Given that all of us may have used manipulative games for personal gain or to protect ourselves, how can we avoid this practice when it is so deeply engrained in our mainstream culture?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

The phenomena of "fake news" directly engages the level of perceived media manipulation in many modern cultures. When we distrust news sources, whose articles and editorials do not line up with our beliefs and perceptions, then we can easily accuse them of being fake news. There are websites, such as Snopes.com that analyze news against the available evidence. However, people are often too busy, distracted, or unmotivated to dig deeply into news stories and editorials. The dilemma is that without a common sense of factual news and opinion, we become more divided and fragmented as a society, breaking our social contracts with each other, and drifting into a war of "all against all," as Hobbes suggested was the condition of a state of nature.

Questions:

1. How is dishonesty as central to game-playing?

Manipulative games are based on the notion that, by **being dishonest, one can trick others into losing**

power, status, or money. When a confidence artist (con-man) gains a victim's trust by playing a game, the deception can lead the victim into giving the con-man what the con-man wants. The gain for the con-man is a loss for the victim. Whether the con-man is a street hustler, a loan shark, or a huckster sending out robo-calls, the **key tactic is dishonesty, along with ill-intent**.

However, manipulative games can be **more subtle than con-jobs**. Friend, spouses, family members, neighbors, coworkers, bosses, and even church members can play manipulative games to get what they want. Perhaps they do not know how to honestly seek what they want, or they doubt that they will succeed by directly asking for it. Or, as in romantic situations, they are **embarrassed to ask directly for something they desire**.

2. What other manipulative games do disputants play?

–Bullying as a War Game: Bullying is a heavy-handed tactic to win a dispute:

(Liu, Min (2016) *People Games at Work*) (Liu, Min (2017) *People Games*

—**Gossip/Disinformation**: If disputants are intent on winning disputes, they can spread rumors about other disputants in an effort to undermine the other disputants' character, credibility, or viewpoint on the conflict at hand. **For example**, "Those disputants are just doing what the union wants them to do."

—**Character Assassination/Social Exclusion**: When disputants have their character assassinated, they can be socially excluded, which will provide more pressure on them to capitulate to the interests of the character assassin. **For example**, "I know that they have lied and that they are not to be trusted, and now they are going to argue that I'm at fault."

—**Marketing as Bullying**: Selling one's viewpoint as a way of undermining other disputants' viewpoints. Some people are excellent at marketing their viewpoint to the disadvantage of other disputants' viewpoints. **For example**, "Here are all of the reasons why my position is stronger than theirs."

—**Propaganda:** A key justification for lying is at the core of all propaganda is that "everybody lies, so why not do it." Of course the casualty of this view is that the truth dies. **For example**, "Our lies need to be more believable than theirs."

—**Blame/Insults/Putdowns/Intimidation/Threats**: These overt bullying tactics can be successful when bystanders do nothing to support the targeted people. **For example**, "See, you have no allies, as everyone is quiet."

—**Hard-Edged Dominance/Submission**: When disputants aggressively remind other disputants that

they have power over them, the power difference will emerge within the dispute process, as well as the "agreement" reached. **For example**, "Regardless of how this dispute process turns out, I'm still your boss and can control your future."

—**You Can't Win**: When disputants are made to feel that, regardless of the outcome of the collaborative process, there will be unpleasant consequences back at the family, circle of friends, community, or workplace. **For example**, "Think about how this will play out amongst your peers?"

—**You Owe Me**: Disputants can leverage other disputants by reminding them that they are owed a favor. **For example**, "I helped you out last year, now it is your turn to help me out."

—**Gotcha**: Disputants can change the focus of the dispute to some mistake that the other side has made, reducing their credibility. **For example**, "You are just trying to get even for all the times that you have been late."

Soft Ways to Win a Dispute: Subtle undermining pressure that is not overt bullying:

(Liu, Min (2016) *People Games at Work*) (Liu, Min (2017) *People Games*)

— **White Lies:** A lie that are said to "protect someone's feelings" can be a subtle condescension that undermines a disputant's character. **For example**, "You have made a great case for your side, but I can't help but think that you have been misled."

— **Passive Lies**: When bystanders allow disputants to be misled, the disputants are being subtly undermined. When bystanders continue to allow these distortions to go uncorrected, they become part of the undermining process. **For example**, "Maybe he is right about her memory slipping."

—**Uncorrected Mistakes**: Sometimes, disputants circulate mistaken information about other disputants. If bystanders do not correct these mistakes, they undermine the targeted disputants' positions and interests. **For example**, "Is it really worth the risk to correct that mistake?"

—**Hidden or Delayed Information**: When important information needed to resolve a dispute is hidden, delayed, or "lost," the disputants who need this information are disadvantaged. Full transparency is needed to fairly resolve a dispute or conflict. **For example**, "We have been trying to locate those documents, but they seem to have been misfiled."

—**Rhetorical Devices**: Some disputants will create a compelling narrative to support their positions and interests. Less creative disputants are disadvantaged by this tactic. **For example**, "This conflict has a long history, let me tell you the story…"

—**Status-Driven Dominance/Submission**: When disputants subtly remind other disputants that they have power over them, the power difference will emerge within the dispute process, as well as the "agreement" reached. **For example**, "Yes, I'm your boss, but I want you to feel free to say anything that you feel you need to say."

—**Appealing to Emotions**: Disputants may try to get leverage over other disputants by appealing to their loyalty to family, friendship, community, or workplace. **For example**, "Good neighbors are sensitive to the noise they make at night."

—**Question Competence**: Disputants can subtly undermine other disputants by questioning their depth of knowledge on the subject in dispute. **For example**, "Do you really understand the complexity of this dispute?"

—**Playing Dumb**: Disputants can deflect blame by claiming ignorance of the issues that are core to the dispute. **For example**, "I didn't know that any of that was going on."

—**Playing the Victim**: Disputants can make a case that they are the more aggrieved party in the dispute at hand. **For example**, "I'm the real victim here, not you."

—**Change the Subject**: Disputants can change the subject to through off the conflict process. **For example**, "This conflict is really about something that happened long ago."

—**Appealing to Logic**: Disputants can try to use logic to overpower emotions. **For example**, "Your feelings are getting in the way of your ability to calmly think this through."

—**Manipulate the Situation, the Person –in-charge, or the Mediator**: Playing charmingly innocent is a great way to convince a boss or mediator that you had no idea that you were being unfair to others. Disputants can immediately pledge to do better, in an effort to "put this all behind us." As I write this, Joe Biden is using this defense against those who have accused him of unwanted touching. To get his campaign for the presidency back on track, he needs to claim his innocence. He was just being affectionate and connecting with women.

3. How do we overcome the various ways that power can tilt the balance of a conflict process towards the interests of the powerful?

The process facilitator needs to be sensitive to the way power can undermine a fair conflict process. To do this, the facilitator needs to watch body language, tone of voice, who talks the most, and who is quiet. Also, if the facilitator senses that power is distorting the process, a private meeting with the suspected victims of power needs to be held in order to strategize how to get the process back on an even keel.

Disputants need to seek support from others in order to gain power, so that a conflict process can become evenly balances. This support can come from coworkers, friends, relatives, neighbors, advocacy groups, religious leaders, and psychotherapists. Union representatives or grievance committee members can also supply support

Individual or group counseling can help disputants learn skills so that they can better advocate for themselves or for issues of fairness and justice.

Chapter Thirteen: Environmental Conflict

Part One: Abundance and Scarcity Thinking for the Environment

Reading:

Excerpt from *Scarcity or abundance? A debate on the environment* by Meyers and Simon, 1994

Key Dilemmas of Part One

Abundance and diversity are indications of public ecosystem health. However, economic wealth is correlated with the private accumulation of resources that increase their value with scarcity and demand. Can these two seemingly opposed values be reconciled?

Modern civilization had created an industrial-technological dream world for some people, while keeping others in a real world of utter poverty an ecological collapse. Can these conflicting worlds be reconciled?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through these dilemmas:

I try to minimize ecosystem harm by walking for errands, not driving; bicycling or taking the bus to commute instead of driving. I recycle; I reuse; I repair. I eat organic. I filter the products that I use by closely examining their ingredients. I help family members reduce their footprint. I drive a hybrid, when I need to drive. And I limit long-distance travel. I'm a member of environmental organizations that advocate for ecosystem health, and I'm turning my backyard into a wildlife refuge. Also, I plan to work closer with Northwest tribes to help them advocate for more pro-environmental policies and spreading the word about their harmony-with-nature philosophies. I vote for candidates who are endorced by environmental groups Of course, this never seems like enough! What else can we do?

Questions:

1. What is the distinction between natural value and artificial value?

We, as civilized humans can value both nature as a value, and money as a value. However, money is not found in nature. Though the paper, used as currency, is found in nature, money can be represented in non-nature ways, such as the value of one's bank account of one's debt. So money is representational or artificial value. However, both nature and representation can have power **over** or **with** us. Money, in capitalist societies, represents power over humans and power over nature.\

Although, humans may wish to live in harmony with nature; they cannot live in harmony with money because the power-over that money represents is constantly being contested in the market of supply and demand, as well as the interests of the wealthy over the interests of the less-than-wealthy. Generally, the wealthy compete for more money and power, and the less-than-wealthy compete for shrinking opportunities and shrinking public services. In this competition for money and power, nature is continually exploited and diminished as a resource to generate more money.

Bluntly, the current version of global capitalism depends on endless growth for endless profit, and endless aggregation of wealth by a small percentage of the population. On the other hand, living in harmony with nature requires a commitment to diverse and flourishing ecosystems. If one commits oneself to living in harmony with nature, one needs to commit materially to such flourishing by minimizing measurable harm, and maximizing measurable flourishing.

2. What are the connections between abundance, scarcity, and violence against nature?

Ecosystems that are diverse and healthy are the definition of natural abundance. Ecosystems that have a narrower range of diversity and show signs of illness are the definition of natural scarcity. Certain "indicator species" can mirror the overall health of an ecosystem. For Native American tribes, near where I live in the Portland area, the salmon are sacred, as they are an indicator species for the river ecosystem. Not surprisingly, some species of salmon are becoming scarce, illustrating the sicknesses of our local river ecosystem.

Any violation of the imperative to seek and maintain harmony with nature is violence against nature, intentional or inadvertent. The suffering of nature reflects the human tendency to soil its own nest, while in pursuit of artificial or economic abundance. Economic abundance is the experience of wealth, power, success, and security. Economic scarcity is the experience of poverty, powerlessness, failure, and insecurity.

The challenge, here, is how to limit the extremes of wealth and power, while investing in ways to bring

people out of poverty and help them achieve power. If this is done effectively, then we will have a society of power-with each other, and abundance-with each other. The complication is that there must also be a commitment to ecosystem abundance, or all of us will face the insecurity of a dying planet. Wealth, alone, will not address this insecurity, as there is no refuge from runaway greenhouse gases.

3. What are the perils and positives to the use of abundance and scarcity thinking

> "Your illusions are a part of you like your bones and flesh and memory." (William Faulkner in Absalom, Absalom!)

To answer question, above, we must first accept that humans live in a dream world, whereas species in natural ecosystems live in a natural world. Those of us who reside in civilization have created an artificial and virtual world that we have come to accept as abundant and healthy, but in ecosystem terms, may be a nightmare. Those who live in nature, dream of nature; those who live in civilization, dream of civilization. These dreams, and the identities that spring from them, tend to define us. Only when we step out into the wilderness, do our civilized identities seem inadequate and inaccurate. If we stay in nature long enough, we restart our propensity of dreams of nature.

Personal Story: *When I'm out in the wilderness (not often enough!), I feel like the real me. Outside of the wilderness, I'm someone else—sort of me, but not the fully real me. I feel connected to nature within a deeply spiritual—even mystical—experience. This is sometimes called the "three day effect." Because I am not trained to live off of the land in any sustainable way, I cannot feel fully secure in the wilderness environment, but there are people who are trained to live in nature sustainably, with few compromises with civilization. Native Americans, before colonialism, generally thrived in harmony with nature, though they were periodically victimized by natural scarcities and cataclysms. Some natives and non-natives have returned to early tribal ways of living, finding great wisdom in tribal traditions.*

On the other end of the spectrum, some tribes have been forced to erode their harmony with nature to live in the capitalist economy. I once met a Native American who helped Northwest tribes improve their forestry practices. I asked her if the tribes' traditional practice of planning for the next seven generations made her work easier. Shockingly, she said tribes have too often been responsible for environmental abuse, like logging on steep terrain, where it would be difficult to regrow trees. She explained that economic pressures on tribes force them to extract natural resources at an accelerated pace.

From the point of contact between colonist Europeans and indigenous Native Americans, there were five major impacts: the spread of genocidal diseases, genocidal war, cultural genocide, economic dislocation, and transforming nature and land into private property which became the means of producing the accoutrements of civilization. The impacts dramatically reduced the number of Native Americans and undermined their successful adaptation to, what was a generally abundant environment. Colonialism

changed America from a land, where the ethos was to maintain harmony with nature, to a land where nature was transformed into mere resources for the rise of civilization. The native ethic of engaging nature, in the collaborative spirit of abundant mutual aid, was transformed into dominating nature in what was to become Darwin's notion of nature as scarcity-driven mutual struggle.

Other Voices: Pyotr Kropotkin (scientist and anarchist) opposed the Darwinian claim that "the struggle for the means of existence, of every animal against all its congeners (own species), and of every man against all other men, was 'a law of Nature'. This view, however, I could not accept, because I was persuaded that to admit a pitiless inner war for life within each species, and to see in that war a condition of progress, was to admit something which not only had not yet been proved, but also lacked confirmation from direct observation. On the contrary, a lecture "on the Law of Mutual Aid," which was delivered at a Russian Congress of Naturalists, in January 1880, by the well-known zoologist, Professor Kessler, the then Dean of the St. Petersburg University, struck me as throwing a new light on the whole subject. Kessler's idea was that besides the law of Mutual Struggle, there is in Nature the law of Mutual Aid, which, for the success of the struggle for life, and especially for the progressive evolution of the species, is far more important than the law of mutual contest." As Professor Kessler died a year after presenting his lecture, Kropotkin further developed Kessler's idea in his book, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902)

4. What is the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic (instrumental) values?

Some people, like Native Americans, believe that nature has intrinsic value, where each organic, or inorganic form, has value in-and-of itself, just as humans have value in-and-of ourselves. Both nature and humanity has a right to exist, and not be carelessly destroyed. Other people believe that nature only has extrinsic or instrumental value. In other words, nature is only valuable if it is instrumental in creating value for humans.

A way to reconcile these two diverging beliefs is to suggest that if natural ecosystems become unhealthy, and runaway greenhouse gases threaten the life of the planet, then unbridled use of nature for human ends will prove to be catastrophic for humans and nature. On this view, it may not make any difference whether we believe nature has intrinsic or extrinsic value; what matters is that ecosystems flourish and that greenhouse gases are halted and reversed, so that both humans and nature can survive sustainably.

Part Two: Environmental Conflict Processes

Readings:

Baur, D., & Schmitz, H. P. (2012). Corporations and NGOs: When accountability leads to co-optation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *106*(1), 9-21.

Dilemma for Part Two:

Environmental policymakers use conflict resolution processes to find consensus between those who profit from environmental destruction, and those who want to stop these practices. Unfortunately, the result of such a consensus ensures that those who profit from environmental destruction, get some of their interests validated and met. Doesn't this result mean that conflict resolution becomes a tool for putting a happy face on continued environmental destruction?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through this dilemma:

A study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, suggests, among other ideas, "decarbonization of the global economy, enhancement of biosphere carbon sinks, behavioral changes, technological innovations, new governance arrangements and transformed social values." (Reported in The Oregonian, Wednesday, August 8, 2018) In the face of these planet-saving mandates, how can a conflict worker be unbiased when facilitating a conflict between a polluter and a government agency trying to limit pollution?

Questions:

1. What is the dilemma of facilitating environmental conflicts, while coming to grips with ecocide?

This is a dilemma that examines the possibility that environmental mediators or facilitator may do more harm than good.

A facilitation process between a polluting business and a government regulator must be framed as: “How are we going to reduce pollution in a way that doesn’t destroy the polluting company, but adequately responds to environmental concerns and the mandates of the government agency?” A facilitator is in charge of the process, so that a decision can be ultimately made that satisfies all of the disputants. This may take some time, but the facilitator does not control the outcome, rather the facilitator controls the process, so that an authentic collaboration can take place.

By framing the facilitation process as strategizing to find a solution that helps address an environmental concern, there is no tension around whether to address the concern or not. However, the facilitator may sense that the company is not serious about taking measures to reduce pollution, but is using the facilitation process to delay taking any pro-environmental action or using the facilitation as a way of delaying a court outcome that will force the polluter to meet an environmental standard. The facilitator may also sense that the governmental agency is not seriously pro-environment, and is in collusion with the company to delay any reduction of environmental impacts. In these cases, when the facilitator senses that the facilitation is not authentic, but is being used as a delaying tactic, the facilitator needs to stop the facilitation because it is not what it purports to be. The worry, of course, is that another facilitator might not share this ethic, and will take the facilitation for the money to be earned.

Ongoing Dilemma: The dilemma of facilitating conflict practices is how to think about the goals of the disputants. Are they using the collaborative process for unethical ends? This difficulty is in how a facilitator is able to discover the true disputant goals. And if the facilitator discovers unethical goals during the conflict process, what should the facilitator do to address them?

Personal Story: I was asked to facilitate a collaborative process that involved personal property damage caused by the Portland area, February, 1997, flooding. A cabin, on a local river, was washed away in a landslide caused by a failed road that was not properly maintained by a County. This negligence was verified by a landslide geologist as Portland State University. The process was between the friend and neighbor of the cabin owner and a County governmental attorney.

It was a short process because the attorney wanted to force the dispute into court, knowing that the cabin owner could not afford to go to court, thus preventing the cabin owner from receiving any compensation for lost personal property—the cabin and its contents. The attorney used the meeting, for a proposed facilitation, to let the cabin owner know that the owner’s case was going nowhere, regardless of any moral imperative to compensate the victim. The attorney’s role was simply to reduce any financial burden for the County.

Neither I, nor the owner's representative charged any fee for trying to find an out-of-court settlement given that the owner was nearly destitute, so there did not seem to be anything unethical for trying to have a collaborative process. But, if we were charging a fee, we might be accused of trying to earn money for what would ultimately have been a futile dialogue.

2. Is there a democratic solution to ecocide, or will we need to turn to authoritarianism?

International environmental treaties, such as the 1992 Earth Summit treaty and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, are encouraging in that they take seriously the impending catastrophe of runaway greenhouse gases.

However, these treaties can be discouraging in that certain powerful countries, like the United States, are resistant to the way these treaties are likely to undermine economic growth, and therefore their limits on greenhouse gas emissions are difficult to enforce. In a 2015 Pew Research Center survey of eighteen countries (including China, United States, and India), the median level of public support for limiting greenhouse gas emissions as a part of an international agreement was 78%, and the median level of public agreement that global climate change is a very serious problem was 54%.

So, a truly democratic decision amongst these countries would mandate limitations on the most polluting countries in the world. That this has not happened suggests that delays in enforcing limits is the result of governmental reluctance, which might be driven by economic worries promoted by big corporations and the wealthy elite. Therefore, it can be argued that undemocratic forces are delaying greenhouse gas reductions, where democratic opinion favors speeding up these reductions.

In other words, we are in the grips of authoritarian rejection of limits, where democratic action is being stifled. Strengthening international democratic action, through nonviolent teach-ins, boycotts, protests, occupations, and civil disobedience, seems like the only route to take to effectively address ecocide and prevent the catastrophic effects of runaway greenhouse gases.

The dilemma here reflects the power-over vs. power-with debate. Power-over is authoritarian, and power-with is democratic. When democratic means to not produce a solution to ecocide, must we turn to authoritarian, even violent means to pull back the processes of ecocide? Hopefully, there is space between power-over and power-with, where nonviolent force (which is neither violent, nor fully democratic) can be used as a tipping point toward halting ecocide.

3. What is morally wrong about culling endangered species to keep their gene pool diverse?

The dilemma here is whether it is appropriate, or not, for humans to kill members of a threatened species, in order to preserve a diverse gene pool. The goal in strengthening a diverse gene pool is to help the

species respond to changing environments with a diversity of genes that ensure a broad possibility of adaptations to a particular environmental change.

On the other side of the dilemma, there are environmental advocates that are suspicious of any human intervention in species survival. Their question is: "How can we know what kind of gene configuration will be the best to adapt to future conditions. We are supposing that a diverse genetic pool is best, whereas a specific gene set might be what the species would evolve toward on their own lights—not ours. The question here is: Who is the best designer for future survival? Us? Or the species itself?

Furthermore, the process of diversifying the gene pool means those individuals with duplicative genes would be killed to keep their genes from dominating the gene pool of the species. Can we justify this species murder? Especially since we are responsible for the acute reduction of the species through our industrial and agricultural transformation of the global nature-scape.

4. How can we navigate this dilemma?

This dilemma has the following crucial feature. First, should we trust science, which generally takes the position that humans are the most, if not the only truly, intelligent species on earth. Or, second, should we believe that other species have their own intelligence that governs their behavior, and can lead to positive adaptations without our intervention. This brings up the "fundamental worldview conflict" addressed in Week 8, concerning the conflicting worldviews between indigenous people and civilized people.

In resolving this dilemma, we need to first address the "fundamental worldview conflict," which itself is a challenging dilemma. Using the conflict resolution strategy that I propose, we need to create a space between modern Western science and the beliefs of indigenous people, who claim more direct knowledge of animals and nature because of their ongoing, tradition-based, conversations with animals and nature. In creating this space, we have room to navigate between the complexities of each side, rather than getting into a polarizing dispute between two fixed positions.

Creating a space between modern science and indigenous wisdom requires that both sides of this conflict acknowledge that they both base their knowledge on contradictory beliefs. Science, in its commitment to evidence-based research, claims the higher ground against indigenous beliefs and experiences that are not evidence-based. However, the construction of scientific evidence is based on the assumption that the only things that exist must be empirically measurable. This assumption cannot be proved empirically. And it can only be proven logically, if you already assume that it is true (circular reasoning: If A, then A). Therefore, if it is true that both empirical science and indigenous wisdom are based on non-empirical beliefs, neither belief can assume that it is superior to the other belief.

My personal belief is that the consequences of native beliefs are often morally superior to the

consequences of modern science because native beliefs are more respectful of nature and protective of human community. And modern science generally approaches nature as a resource, and as having only instrumental (means to an end) value, rather than intrinsic (worth-in-itself) value. Furthermore, science is saturated with a form of individualism that is apathetic toward ongoing community commitments.

However, these are generalizations and do not give science credit for many positive discoveries, including public health remedies and sound environmental philosophies, policies and practices. If we are going to construct a space between these two belief systems, we must ignore my personal belief (above), except to view both belief systems as having positive consequences to consider.

5. Do environmental scientists offer a space to blend western science with indigenous beliefs and practice?

Of course, environmental scientists have beliefs across a spectrum, just as Native Americans identify as traditional and non-traditional, and everywhere in-between. That said, my reading of environmental texts and Native American texts demonstrates that there is much common ground between these two groups. And as time progresses, it seems that they are coming closer together.

I think there is hope for resolving the worldview dilemma when space is created for mainstream scientists to respect environmental scientists, who respect Native American beliefs and practices.

6. Is this respect between these three groups happening?

In regards to environmental issues, the three groups agree that humans need to live more sustainably within the context of nature. As reported in the New York Times, February 14, 2019, “For every human being, there are over 1,000 tons of built environment: roads, office buildings, power plants, cars and trains and long-haul trucks. It is a technological exoskeleton for the species.” https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/14/opinion/green-new-deal-ocasio-cortez-.html

Humans have created a vast nest of artificial material, chemicals, and gases. On the other hand, humans form a small part of life on earth, as illustrated in the following link:

https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/5/29/17386112/all-life-on-earth-chart-weight-plants-animals-pnas

Chapter Fourteen: Navigating Anarchism as Collaboration and Current Political World

Part One: Anarchism as Collaboration

Readings:

O'Connor, J. (1991). "Socialism and ecology". *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, *2*(3), 1-12.

Key Dilemma of Part One:

Is anarchical-collaboration self-defeating by trying to create a collaborative society amongst people whose identity depends on having power and privilege over others?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through these dilemmas:

I have found that full equality in society, workplace, and home is something we can realistically strive for, and someday achieve. In my understanding of traditional indigenous cultures, it was everyone's duty to protect tribal members. In turn, it was the tribe's duty to foster maximum freedom and equality for each tribal member. There were tribal roles that needed to be fulfilled, and divisions of labor, which may have felt unfree and unequal to some members, but there was a general realization that the tribe could not function, at its most optimal level, unless tribal members were satisfied with their role, and their place within the division of labor. Certainly, within the longstanding traditions of tribes, certain discriminations, inequalities, and oppressions existed, historically; and which tribes are currently committed to overcome.

In my interactions with tribes, and my exposure to tribal philosophy, I am inspired to imagine a broader societal acceptance of collaboration and mutual aid, two the hallmarks of anarchism. Their sense of collaboration is demonstrated in tribal councils and their belief in the harmony of people with nature. They literally collaborate with nature in their rituals and practices. In this way, the tribal spirit is one of mutual aid.

One of our Native American graduate students designed a tribal program to better serve the needs of elder tribal members, who had become too isolated. The program was quickly accepted by tribal leaders and the

tribal council in the spirit of mutual aid. For them, mutual aid is maximized by the shared wealth of holding property in common, outlawing private ownership of the means of production, while embracing personal property. These are the ultimate core elements of anti-capitalism, anarchism, socialism, and communism. All of these political philosophies agree that the realization of a truly just society is one where anarchy (anarkhos 'without a chief') means the flattening of all hierarchies and "power-over" relationships. The resulting society embraces "power-with" societies, where decisions are reached either through consensus, or direct democracy, as in ancient Athenian democracy, where citizens directly made policy, without any intermediary representation. Historically, anarchism is not something new or utopian, it has a long tradition for some people, and a realistic aspiration for other people, who have discovered that modern capitalism is freedom for the few and oppression for the many. The recent success of democratic socialism in the United States is an example of the power of campaigns for social and economic justice.

I have participated in many organizations that make decisions by consensus, and I worked in two long-term places of employment, where all decisions were made directly without representation. So, I have seen that this works, though it certainly was painstaking at times! I learned a lot about navigating difference in these settings, and a lot about collaborative conflict processes.

Other Voices:

"For the anarchist, freedom is not an abstract philosophical concept, but the vital concrete possibility for every human being to bring to full development all the powers, capacities, and talents with which nature has endowed hum (her), and turn them to social account." (Rudolf Rocker)

'[A]t every stage of history, our concern must be to dismantle those forms of authority and oppression that survive from an era when they might have been justified, in terms of the need for security or survival, or economic development, but that now contribute to—rather than alleviate—material and cultural deficit." (Noam Chomsky, On Anarchism)

Questions:

1. Why should anarchism embrace collaboration as a central principle?

The enemy of anarchy is hierarchy or power-over. Anarchy seeks power-with, which has been popularized in feminist literature and scholarship, as well as the literature and scholarship of collaborative processes. Collaborative processes are expanding more deeply into society. Therefore, I am optimistic that collaboration is gaining a stronger, defining foothold in our mainstream culture.

With the increase in collaborative processes, hierarchies are flattened, and authority is decentralized. Teamwork, and mutual aid, replaces the pecking order and exploitation of hierarchy. As hierarchies are

flattened, along with the diversification of workplaces and neighborhoods, oppression disappears. As oppression disappears, true freedom from tyranny emerges, with a population more deeply committed to productive and creative work. In this transition, people will become less dependent on the work of exploiters, managers, owners, and investors, which is not human-productive, but capital-intensive.

An example of how this works is a common neighborhood conflict, which happened near my home. A neighbor planned to repaint her fence that divides her property from ours. It is her fence, so she feels entitled to paint both sides whatever she feels will fit her overall home color scheme. We find out that that color will clash with the stain on our other fencing, so we ask that she not paint on our side of the fence. As a hasty resolution, she decided to avoid the conflict by leaving our side of the fence unpainted.

What we could have done is agree to carefully stain our side of her fence, so that it would not need refinishing for many years. This would protect her from the problem reemerging, when in the future, we might have less carefully stained our side of the fence, leaving her to fix any stain that dripped onto her side of the fence. This agreement would have been more collaborative and contributed to the experience of mutual aid. It also would have avoided any intervention from our neighborhood association or any other governing agency. An anarchist victory!

2. How can collaborative anarchism create a revolution which win-wins our way to moral growth and social progress?

People often equate the term, “anarchism,” with the violent overthrow of the state. This pejorative view demonizes anarchism as chaos and disorder for the sake of chaos and disorder, a return to the Hobbes’ view that the pre-civilized state of nature was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” However, we have found that pre-civilized tribes live and often lived highly collaborative, abundant, and healthy lives, hardly solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

Getting past the negative press, anarchism actually refers to living without the extreme hierarchies and power-over dynamics of civilized life—which actually commit everyone to a state of anxiety and insecurity, and ensure that the ever-increasing homeless population are living lives that are, indeed, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

Anarchism seeks to create a highly collaborative society, filled with the dynamics of mutual aid. As people become more committed to collaborative processes and mutual aid, there will be less and less need for the overarching power of the state, the wealthy, and the business class. The state, private ownership of the means of production, and the wealth divide will “wither away” In fact, there have always been people committed to collaborative processes and mutual aid. As conflict workers, our commitment to collaborative processes, everywhere in society, is promoting this kind of egalitarian

anarchy. Our collaborative efforts expand an existing revolution, through each collaborative conflict process; which in turn, creates stronger ties between disputants.

These stronger ties, added to commitments for mutual aid, increase our sense of security, while lowering our anxiety. Higher security and lessened anxiety will create a positive generator for change. With this momentum, public ownership can nonviolently expand to the necessities of life, direct democracy can begin to replace representative democracy, and a horizontal network of workers' councils will begin to deliver the Marxist morality of "from each according to his (her) ability, to each according to his (her) needs".

Anarchy, as a socialist ideal, has suffered from its denigration as a cult of violence, dedicated to the precipitous overthrow of the rich and powerful. Revolutions of this kind created vanguard political parties that easily became a new group of bosses, replacing an old group of bosses (as musically illustrated by the Who's song, "Won't Get Fooled Again,") In addition, the idea of a network of workers councils has also demonized the bosses, when these leaders might find that collaboration is more in their humane interests than the usual practices of inhumane domination.

3. It seems like self-interested adversariality, and competition for greater status, power, and wealth, is going to make any transition to a collaborative, mutual aid society quite slow and difficult. How could it be accelerated?

Publicly funding collaborative governance processes, as well as other levels of mediation and facilitation, combined with public funded mutual aid projects must become part of the political dialogue. All political parties need to endorse these processes and projects. If people have more security and their needs are heard, there will be less reason for people to fight, deceive, accumulate wealth, and seek power over others. Ultimately, we need to transition to a society where generosity and security replace self-centeredness and competition for excessive wealth, power, and status. We need to find a balance between freedom-from poverty and insecurity, and freedom-to create a life of community and meaning.

Collaborative processes can lead the way to that nonviolent revolution, where inhumanity is replaced with humanity.

4. Doesn't it seem like any transition to a more communitarian society is essentially a cultural revolution that must be global, just as the capitalist economy has become global?

Given the interconnectedness of the modern world, local change can move virally to global change. Even in the 1960s, when there was not internet, revolutionary changes were happening globally.

Part Two: Collaboration in the Current Political World

Readings:

Ruggie, J. G. (1972). "Collective goods and future international collaboration". *American Political Science Review*, *66*(3), 874-893.

De Morris, A. A., & Leistner, P. (2009). From neighborhood association system to participatory democracy: Broadening and deepening public involvement in Portland, Oregon. *National Civic Review*, *98*(2), 47-55.

Key Dilemma of Part Two:

How can egalitarian collaborative processes gain acceptance, when so many contemporary conflict resolution practices are enmeshed in corporate, judicial, and bureaucratic institutions that are dedicated to maintaining their domination over large masses of people?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through these dilemmas:

Portland's Neighborhood Associations have been an example of a somewhat-decentralized decision-making structure, with sometimes-effective collaboration with the city government. Unfortunately, the relationship between the two types of governance is fraying, as of 2019. https://www.portlandmercury.com/news/2019/08/01/26894563/in-search-of-equal-representation-portland-looks-beyond-neighborhood-associations

Questions:

1. What is the essence of collaboration?

In my opinion, there are multiple characteristics of an effective collaboration:

Treating the other disputants as having the radical equality of existential realities. In other words, their reality is just as real as our own, though it may be radically different from our own.

To collaborate across the difference, we must not be perfectionists and expect perfect collaboration with everyone in the room in any one session, or even in one series of sessions. Some participant's realities might be too difficult to engage within the current group.

However, we must continue to reach everyone in a "broadening and deepening" way, as time goes forward. Anyone left out of the collaboration potentially undermines the notion of participatory democracy.

2. How is collaboration central to alternate conflict processes?

Certainly, the kinds of "conflict resolution" processes that dominate our society are found in legal or administrative processes or political power. I suggest that none of these involve much collaboration between disputants. Legal, administrative, and political conflicts are resolved by authorities and powerful people, who rarely meaningfully engage disputants.

However, the fields of mediation, facilitation, restorative justice, and collaborative governance are making progress in all of these sectors. In all of these areas, collaborative governance, mediation, and restorative justice organizations are populated by lawyers and non-lawyers, who work to resolve and learn from conflicts through truly collaborative processes.

3. How can contemporary political party conflicts benefit from collaborative processes?

Political conflict can get intense at times, and it seems like politicians rarely cross the aisle to collaborate with the other side. Politicians both reflect and encourage the divisions in the USA. Grassroots collaborative processes can, in time, influence larger social and political processes. Over time, the culture will learn that collaboration is empowering and efficient. These two characteristics are needed everywhere, locally, nationally, and globally. Without collaboration, politics continues to be an endless swing between the interests of left and right, rich and poor. Collaborative processes create egalitarian power-sharing which, in turn, create efficient work and secure communities. Without collaboration, power easily becomes oppressive and generates rebellion and disaffection amongst workers and community members.

4. How can collaborative processes improve political interactions with the news media?

The news media also reflects political, social, and economic divisions, and the news media dramatizes

and aggravates the divisions between disputants to provoke interest in their readers and watchers. It seems that the news media does not believe that collaboration between different disputants is newsworthy. It also seems that collaboration is perceived by the news media as coalition-building, with the aim of "winning" conflicts.

My suggestion is that the news media is invited into conversations about this problem. There are certainly some members of the media who are somewhat aware of successful collaborations that solve difficult problems and resolve conflicts that save taxpayer money, avoid lawsuits, and create coalitions of diverse identities and interests.

Chapter Fifteen: Navigating Virtual World Conflicts: How Electronic Devices Shape Us

Part One: Personal Conflicts with Technology

Don't use the telephone.

People are never ready to answer it.

Use poetry.

Jack Kerouac 1970 (Scattered Poems)

Readings:

Taylor, J. (2011). Technology: Virtual vs. Real Life: You Choose. Do you lead a mediated life. *Psychology Today*.

Key Dilemma of Part One:

How can we personally enjoy the benefits of the virtual technological world, without aggravating our connection to the natural world?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through these dilemmas:

My experience with electronic devices is probably similar to yours. They're great to use to create, communicate, and access resources. They seem to be indispensable in navigating the post-modern world around us. I imagine that those people who cannot afford electronic devices and/or they do not have the patience, or inclination, to operate them effectively, or find solutions to problems that inevitably occur while using them. I fear that their isolation from the cyber-world is going to be a hardship on many levels. It will likely stagnate or lower their income, undermine their careers, and limit their access to vital resources. These

limitations will, in turn, negatively impact their health, family and social relationships, as well as longevity. They will be newly victimized and oppressed by this technology, as it increasingly shapes our "civilized" world.

In my direct experience with electronic technology, I believe it has helped my income, career, social and family life in some ways, and harmed these things in other ways. Technology has cost me a lot of money to keep my various electronic devices functioning. This expense has not been fully compensated by my income. It has helped me stay employed, but it has also pulled me away from social connections with colleagues, friends, and family, undermined my feeling more alienated, than successful, in those arenas.

More specifically, when my computer systems go haywire, I feel incalculably powerless, frustrated, and angry. Even though I have been working on computers since the beginning of the personal computer age, which was at full speed in the 1980s, I have not become a computer technician, nor hobbyist, so I easily get lost in the non-intuitive techniques needed to fix problems. I must rely on tech-support people, who are often reading scripts, which often come to an end after hours of waiting for someone to pick up my call and then run through their scripts.

Personally, I have conflicts with my computers quite often. Just lately, I have had the displeasure of ordering a new multifunction printer that would not communicate with my computer. After spending an hour and a half with the tech-support script reader, I was told to send back the printer, and it would be replaced with a "refurbished" printer. When the replacement printer arrived, I discovered that it too would not communicate with my computer, and when I tried to use it as a copier, it jammed repeatedly, never functioning at all. After returning both printers, I received an email saying that one of them was not received, even though I used the label that they sent me. They threatened to charge me for the "missing" replacement printer. I checked with the Better Business Bureau to find that this company has a horrible rating. So, not only am I mad at the company, I'm mad at myself for not going to the Better Business Bureau ratings in the first place (creating a new inner conflict). I can contact my credit card company and challenge the fee, but my experience has been that the credit card company sides with other companies, not consumers.

I have had updates that don't properly update; technical support that does not properly support. I have had old programs that stop getting updated. I have experienced tech companies that slowly begin to force me to only their programs and hardware that they make. The conflict is similar to human/human conflicts, where one person has vastly more power than the other.

Computers, the companies that make them, and the technical support workers that "help" you, have absolute power over me. I can give the product or company a bad review, but there are programs that can populate review sites with massive numbers of positive reviews. Simply, I feel powerless in these conflicts, like have a conflict with the President of the United States. Powerlessness creates resentment that begins to infect other relationships, spawning more conflicts.

In these kinds of conflicts, there is no current way to find a process to collaboratively work toward transformative communication and restorative justice. I am left with my sad appeals to distant technocrats for their fairness and kindness. Unfortunately, they do not seem to be bothered by getting negative reviews; so

what compels them to be sympathetic to me? If their business model is to "first **get** the consumer's money; then second, find ways to **not** give it back," what recourse do I have? I could try to spend, who knows how much, time trying to locate a consumer advocate, to apply institutional pressure, and threaten the company with a news release. Or I could hire a consumer-affairs lawyer, but that would be cost-prohibitive.

Again, the feelings of powerlessness, rage, and incompetency flood into my otherwise semi- serene mood. In the context of a global economy, consumer advocacy and consumer laws also need to have a global reach. Ideally, there would be globally-accessible, collaborative, processes available to all consumers, where some kind of parity between multinational companies and consumers could begin to be achieved.

Other Voices:

"In the globalized world we have transactions dealing from different parts of the world. They can be protected by only laws which are totally democratically formed; and if they fail to do so, then the people may question their relevancy, and also the government forming such rules." (Abhinav R. Pisharody, Symbiosis Law School, Hyderabad, The World Journal of Juristic Polity, 2017)

Questions:

1. Are electronic devices more than tools, communication, and resources?

Electronic devices have become embedded into our daily lives. They started out as tools, communication devices and resources. Now they are part of the human community—like a new appendage that has become part of our bodies; they have become necessities for our survival. Even homeless people need cell phones as an important means for their survival. It is no surprise that humans have developed chronic conflicts with their electronic devices. If it was possible to hack into our cell phones, tablets, and computers, and observe the kind of virtual/real world conflicts occurring regularly, we might be shocked at how frequent this phenomenon has become. Cognitive dissonance used to only be within our minds; now we have an additional cognitive dissonance between ourselves and our new computer-appendage. Who do we default too? How do we resolve these conflicts?

2. Can computers think, or are they unthinking slaves at the command of people?

The computers that exist today are simply machines that store and transmit data at the command of human designed programs, and deliver data to humans at their command. This is not thinking because there today's computers do not have a way to understand the data that it manipulates. Computers only

know “meaning” as a data set, not as we understand “meaning” to be our ability to place data into the context of our lives, environments, cultures, and history. “Meaning” means “knowing something in a human context.” Computers only have an unthinking mechanical context, which they cannot know as more than a set of data. Context will never be reducible to a set of data.

In terms of conflict, if I have a conflict with a computer, I am not having a conflict with the machine, as a conscious being, I am having a conflict with its function and data set, which was programed by specific human beings. Therefore, I am having an indirect conflict with inaccessible people. This mirrors the kinds of conflicts that I might have with a multinational corporation. The people who make decisions about how that corporation will interact with my life are inaccessible to me, just as computer programmers are inaccessible to me.

3. How are electronic devices addictions and distractions?

Furthermore, computers can easily become addictions and distractions, undermining family, friend, and work communities. Our culture is already plagued with social dislocation, as people move from school to school, neighborhood to neighborhood, town to town, state to state, country to country, job to job, and continent to continent—maybe even earth to moon, if for some reason, it is economically or scientifically profitable to have a lunar outpost. This dislocation weakens our ties to family, former friends, former coworkers, and former neighbors. In turn, our sense of community and security erodes.

In the face of computer driven news updates, our anxiety increases. Escape from anxiety can easily lead to addictions and distractions. We get addicted to the many interesting features of our electronic devices because it makes us feel good to be distracted from our daily anxieties. The key questions are: First, how do these addictions and distractions get in the way of normal brain functioning (If there is a “normal.”), community membership, physical vitality, productivity, and happiness? Second, if these addictions and distractions have become dysfunctional, what can be done to cure the malady?

4. How is computer technology hyper-logical, abstract, and context-denying?

Computer technology is hyper-logical because everything in this virtual space is a linear progression of cause-and-effect functionality. It is abstracted and mapped, so that the virtual world is divided into infinite categories and resource streams. Idiosyncratic contexts are lost, or glossed-over, when virtual realities reduce the irreducible features of our world to reducible, digital data, and pixels. A photograph or video is not the object photographed or videoed; it is a representation of that object. Neither is an object, an oral story, or live music captured in descriptive words the same as the actual object, story, or music. Computer technology does not treat individual computer users as unique people, nor does it link directly with the natural world. People and nature become data for computer technology to manipulate.

When I have a problem or conflict with computer technology, computer technology does not have a conflict with me, rather computer technology has a conflict with the data that represents me and my problem. This creates an asymmetrical conflict, where the user is up against an inhuman machine and the people who program and maintain it—and the computer support people, who follow scripts to fix problems, and where I am, again, reduced to data and time management.

Part Two: Abstract, Virtual, and Natural Modes of Framing the World

Readings:

Wheeler, T. (2018). In cyberwar, there are no rules: why the world desperately needs digital Geneva Conventions. *Foreign Policy*, *12*.

Key Dilemma of Part Two:

Contemporary mainstream cultures increasingly adopt abstract and virtual modes of framing the world and its elements; do these world-framing devices encourage us to reduce our view of the natural world and other people to generalized categories and stereotypes?

Review of List of Navigation Strategies for Seemingly Intractable Conflicts, Differences, and Dilemmas:

Example to help us work through these dilemmas:

"Yet the doctrine that *man is a machine* was argued most forcefully in 1751, long before the theory of evolution became generally accepted, by (Julien Offray) de La Mettrie; and the theory of evolution gave the problem an even sharper edge, by suggesting there may be no clear distinction between living matter and dead matter. And, in spite of the victory of the new quantum theory, and the conversion of so many physicists to indeterminism de La Mettrie's doctrine that man is a machine has perhaps more defenders than before among physicists, biologists and philosophers; especially in the form of the thesis that man is a computer." (Popper, K.: *Of Clouds and Clocks*, included in *Objective Knowledge*, revised, 1978, p. 224)

Questions:

1.

2. ***How are electronic devices world-framing devices?***

3. ***Is there a war where computer technology is battling users and nature?***
4. ***How are we becoming ruled by computer technology?***

As electronic devices ceased to be mere tools, communicators, and resource access points, they became human-framing and world-framing devices. This transition started with the industrial revolution (starting in the middle of the eighteenth century) when people marveled at the capabilities of the new mechanical technology, and started to think of themselves as machines, following Descartes view of animals are machines unable to think.

As the computer revolution has become a global phenomenon, we are now linked in a global network that literally frames the world as a virtual entity. We now have a fully realized virtual world existing side-by-side with the natural world. This is how the notions of de La Mettrie's notion of humans as machines and Isaac Newton's idea that the world is a huge mechanical system held together by God have taken such a strong grip on what has become computerized thinking.

2. What is computerized thinking?

In my opinion, computerized thinking parallels accurate, efficient, speedy, computerized, data management and functionality. It is the epitome of perfectly rational thinking. The opposite of computerized, rational thinking are the sluggish, inefficient, inaccurate impersonations of rationality, and the impulsive behaviors driven by both internal emotions and getting caught up in the emotional power of one's identity-groupthink. In short, the opposite of computer thinking is the kind of thinking we might expect from animals. This increasing split between the human and the animal worlds had helped expand the empathetic gap between humans and animals, and this gap further aggravates the disconnect between humans and nature.

Rational, mechanical, and now computerized thinking have become dominant forces in civilization since the eighteenth century, but it had its earliest conceptualization in Aristotle supposing that humans are rational animals (from scholasticism). On Aristotle's view, we have the capacity to carry out rationally formulated projects through our deliberative imagination. From this, one might argue that computers function as "rationally formulated projects," at the command of our "deliberative imagination."

The project of this book is to close the gaps between people and between people and nature, so computerized thinking will be challenges, and replaced with "connected knowing," "meditative thinking," and "engaged thinking."

3.

As I have suggested, above, computer technology can easily overpower users who may have problems

with it, or find themselves in conflict with it. Users, seen as mere data to computers, are alienated by the inhumanity of this kind of interaction and reification (reduction to an object). Nature, itself, is reduced to data, and the life force of nature is objectified and denied. Therefore, computer technology is great when it functions for the benefit of individuals and cultures; it is demonic when there is a conflict with users, with cultures, and with nature.

4. How are we becoming ruled by computer technology?

An argument can be made that our day-to-day lives are ruled by the bureaucratic state, as well as corporate capitalism that controls our economic life. Furthermore, we are ruled by the cultural structures of mainstream American life, as well as the workplace, school, family, and identity group cultures. All of these structures are enmeshed with computer technology. As I write this, I am working on a desktop computer, with my cell phone nearby, as well as a multifunction printer, copier, fax, and scanner. I have control over some aspects of this technology (importantly, the on/off switches). However, most importantly, my computer technology has control over me. So, in my personal, indoor, cloistered life to my out-of-home work life, social life, political life, consumer life, travel life, I have some control over my travel technology, but mostly, I am at the mercy of vast amounts of computer technology that represents the interests of governing structures, transit structures, cell tower placements, communication functionality, GPS reliability, and economic/consumer interactions.

5. Aren't humans behind every computer, making what appear to be conflicts with machines really conflicts between users and people hidden behind machines?

I suggest that there are people in powerful positions in business and government, who could help users become more empowered to resolve conflicts with the people responsible for computer-abuse of users. Consumer rights organizations are trying to advocate for consumer protection regulations that will provide relief from the abuses of the tech-world. However, there needs to be international agreements because the tech-world is not local or even national; it is global. There needs to be international consumer protection organizations. There is the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN), "composed of consumer protection authorities from over 60 countries." (website: www.icpen.org) However, it has been suggested that international law is the "only way to assure a safer environment for consumers to act in the global environment." (The World Journal on Juristic Polity, August, 2017)

6. When your computerized devise talks in a human voice, and you command it to do something, how is this different than the master-slave relationship? Why can't there just be beeps, rather than voices and personifications?

The master-slave relationship is the essence of hierarchy and authority. The master gains power and

freedom by having slaves, servants, or workers, who are held in some kind of bondage, whether it be chattel, indenture, or non-represented wage work. A computer is enslaved so that we are free to produce more, and climb the hierarchies at work. A computer is just like an underling in the hierarchy who carries out our assignments.

7. Is cyber war a real or imagined threat?

Computer hacking can steal money from our online accounts, steal our identities, and take down websites, but is this malicious encroachment on our financial safety and privacy really a kind of war? Some of our political leaders and news outlets would like us to believe that we have entered an age of cyberwar, where computers are being used to undermine an enemy's ability to carry out certain important functions. If hackers were able to tilt the 2016 presidential election from Hillary Clinton to

Donald Trump, then perhaps this constitutes an attack on our democratic institution.

8. How are we going to create peace, as nations and political entities use the virtual world to make war against their enemies?

If peaceful processes have many dimensions: international law, international negotiations, international commitments to fair trade, peaceful interventions in civil disorders, humanitarian aid, and nonviolent strategies for change and security, then what can peaceful strategies do to stop cyber aggression and war? Must we have global culture change to peacefully force the end to this war? Can there be international agreements for political entities to find technologies to disarm cyber-weapons?

Conclusion

In the conclusion of this book, we return to summarize how certain worldview assumptions are embedded in conflict processes, and how certain conflict processes are embedded in worldviews. Also, we return to the assertion that the theory and practice of conflict processes need to be examined at the level of worldviews. We also make a case for why Western philosophy needs insights and practices from conflict processes, as expanded in the text.

Worldview Assumptions Embedded in Conflict Processes:

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Western analytic tradition believes that neutrality, or an unbiased approach to knowledge, can be gained through generalizations and abstractions that are based on reliable assumptions and empirical evidence. However, other cultural traditions base their knowledge on experiences that Western thought often does not acknowledge as valid. In short, Western analysts think they are unbiased and neutral. However, people from other traditions do not see them as unbiased and neutral. Therefore, I suggest that conflict analysts must navigate the space between the Western tradition and the other traditions. Otherwise, Western analysists lose credibility with other cultures, as well as their tendency to impose Western notions on non-Western people.

Conflict Processes Embedded in Western Worldviews:

In Western cultures, and in the non-Western countries dominated by Western thought, competitive and argumentative conflict processes have saturated the Western worldview. We form arguments with sufficient evidence and reasoning to defeat other arguments, just as lawyers fight with each other by creating the “best” argument to defeat the “best” argument of their opponents. Essentially, war is the metaphor for the Western conflict process, just as war is the device of colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism.

Individualism and Self-Interest:

In my view, the most disconcerting assumptions in Western thinking about conflict processes are the following. First, Western thought is saturated by notions of individualism, where self-interest is assumed

to be the primary concern of people. In more indigenous and Eastern societies that have escaped the domination of Western forms of thought, there is a balance between self-interest and other-interest. This occurs in societies where security comes from a balance of one's trust for community members as well as self-trust; whereas in individualistic societies, self-trust and self-interest dominate in a highly competitive and other-suspicious social order.

Balance of Self-Trust and Other-Trust:

As an example of balance of community-trust and self-trust, I asked my students, in a small graduate seminar, which students grew up feeling secure in their neighborhoods? The only students in that seminar, who felt secure growing up, were the two Black students who grew up in communities where they knew everyone who lived around them, and where very few people moved away from those communities. One student grew up in a predominately Black community in Portland, Oregon. The other student grew up in an African village. From this, we can suppose that security and self-trust may emerge from secure communities, where one can trust that their neighbors will provide tangible support.

Community-Centric Over Identity-Centric:

Community-centric trust is different from identity-group trust, where the latter depends on ongoing inclusion in a specific identity group. Often identity groups require high levels of conformity that prevent individuals from asserting their uniqueness and differences. In contrast, physical communities flourish when everyone in that community is accepted for their uniqueness and difference. This kind of acceptance does not eliminate conflicts; rather constructive conflict is not equated with exclusion from the group. Healthy conflict process means avoiding conflict-denial, or passive exclusion from community. Embracing diversity and difference means dealing with difference and conflict in a positive, life-affirming, way.

Spectrums and Continua over Categories and Polarizations:

Second, Western thought has become intensely categorical and polarized. Rather than using generalizations as continua with subtle gradations, Western thought too often uses polarized categories that can be used for quick decisions for inclusion or exclusion. For example a person can be perceived as trustworthy or not trustworthy, responsible or irresponsible, smart or dumb, kind or mean, fun or too serious, interesting or boring. Within Western thought, we navigate our world on the basis of quick decisions on the basis of these polarized categories. It seems that our very survival depends on these quick decisions. Someone is familiar or strange; trustworthy or scary.

In neighborhoods, villages, or tribes, where mutual aid is a key to survival, everyone in that community can contribute to the group's survival. Everyone can be understood on a spectrum of continuums, rather than polarized categories. Effective conflict processes that become socialized and institutionalized transform communities and their underlying worldviews.

Connection and the Common Good over Disconnection and Alienation:

Third, healthy people in healthy communities depend on strong feelings of connection, rather than disconnection and alienation. There are several ways that people can experience connection, but the precondition is that people need to develop authentic trust for one another. This is difficult in highly individualized and competitive cultures, such as the one that has evolved in mainstream American society. The connection that I am discussing is not identity group connection because identity-group connections are meant to affirm one's identity, not affirm connection across difference. It is my view that healthy communities and healthy people are based on an affirmation of difference and diversity, not an affirmation of similarity. Ironically, embracing diversity achieves the common good better than legislating some unified identity.

View from Compassion and View from Judgment:

For me, the key to affirming difference and diversity comes from the compassion, not judgment. Though we need to make judgments in our lives, compassion opens up the possibility of connection across difference. I suggest that we find a balance between our views from judgment and our views from compassion. Of course, we must be critical of all of the influences in our culture that make the view from compassion difficult and even perilous.

From Compassion to Community to True Democracy:

As an example, the MeToo movement has dramatized the sad prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual abuse that occurs in all strata of our larger culture. How are the victims of these outrages supposed to have a view from compassion when such views may have kept victims in harm's way? In any way that our larger culture has the potential to oppress of victimize us, we need to find a way to effectively transform that culture. Because collaborative conflict processes are the essence of democracy, any society that claims to be a democracy must institutionalize and socialize these processes or be deemed to be hypocritical to the name "democracy." Engaging in a conflict process as equal participants encourages connection across difference, and generates ongoing healthy communities, which may be one of the first steps toward positive social transformation.

Democracy and Anarchy:

In my opinion, collaborative democracy leads to anarchic social transformation because the essence of democracy is collaboration amongst equal participants, and equal participants are created when power hierarchies are flattened to the degree that power is truly shared by citizens committed to the common good and mutual aid.

Why Western Philosophy Needs Insights and Practices from Conflict Processes:

As developed, above, Western philosophy needs to adjust its practices, just as conventional Western conflict processes need to adjust its practices in the following ways:

1. Recognize its bias towards exclusionary individualism and self-interest.
2. Reorganize its thinking toward a balance of self- and other-interest, changing its focus on what is good for us, collectively, not just a combination of ones self-interest with another's self-interest.
3. Normalize the differences between people, rather than overarching constructions of what we have in common.
4. Adjust Western philosophical thinking to become more community-centric, rather than identity-centric.
5. Recalibrate Western philosophical thinking away from polarized categories towards spectrums of continua.
6. Reorient Western philosophy away from disconnection and alienation toward connection and the common good.
7. Adopt more of the view from compassion, rather than the current over-reliance on the view from judgment.
8. Flatten the hierarchy of Western philosophy by taking more seriously the philosophy of non-Western cultures.
9. Transform the Western political philosophy analysis of anarchism by viewing it as a radically democratic and collaborative form of self-governance.

Topics for further philosophical consideration:

1. Bias towards Exclusionary Individualism and Self-Interest

2. Balance of Self- and Other-Interest
3. Normalizing the Differences between People
4. Becoming more Community-Centric
5. Spectrums of Continua
6. Connection and the Common Good
7. View from Compassion/View from Judgment
8. Flattening the Hierarchy between Western Philosophy and World Philosophies
9. Anarchy: Radically Democratic and Collaborative Form of Self-Governance

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